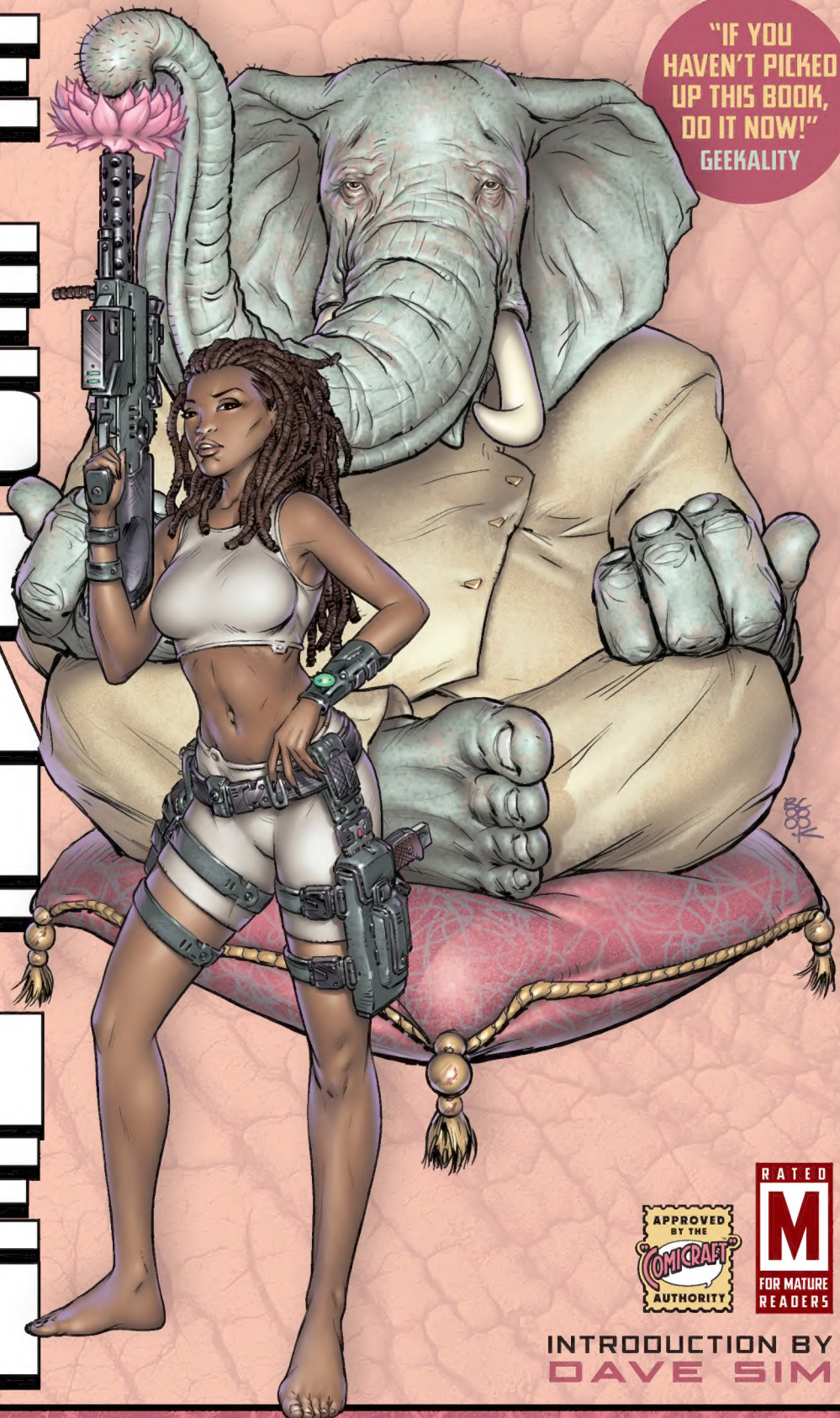
ELEPHANTMEN™



"IF YOU HAVEN'T PICKED UP THIS BOOK, DO IT NOW!"
GEEKALITY

APPROVED BY THE "COMICRAFT" AUTHORITY

RATED M FOR MATURE READERS

INTRODUCTION BY DAVE SIM

VOLUME 06

EARTHLY DESIRES

STARKINGS • MEDELLIN • PARKER • HINE • KANE • ROSHELL • COOK

٥١

ELEPHANTMEN

Earthly Desires

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MOST GRACIOUS THE MOST MERCIFUL

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

PRESENTS

ACTIVE IMAGES

APPROVED BY THE COMICRAFT AUTHORITY

STORY & LETTERING

RICHARD STARKINGS

with MONIFA ALDRIDGE

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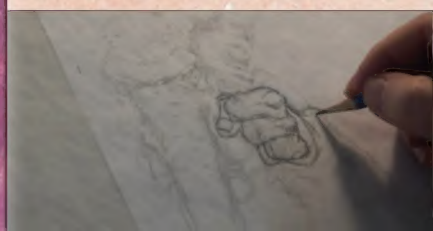
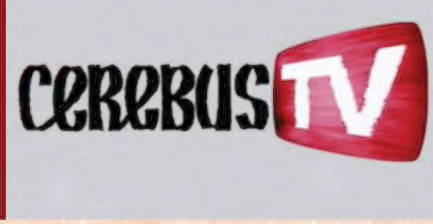
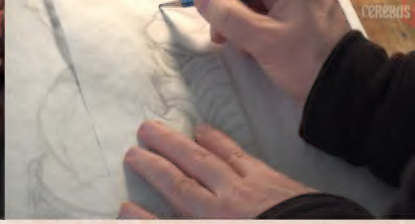






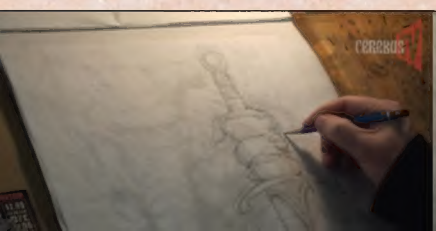
INTRODUCTION

A NOTE from the PRESIDENT

I have to say that HIP FLASK has to count as one of the most amazing "bait and switches" ever perpetrated on the comics-buying/comics-reading public. The bait, of course, was this GIANT BAD HEAVY METAL MEETS JACK KIRBY RIFF war between humans and these mutated anthropomorphic creatures - called "Unhumans" and "Elephantmen". KAMANDI told sideways, in a way. "The Island of Dr. Moreau" for the Pepsi Generation. What you THINK you're getting is a really, really tired cliché about the mad scientist who mutates all these creatures and plans to use them to take over the world. Yawn. The switch was that it wasn't going to be about the war. The war was just the set-up, the actual story, the actual series of anecdotal stories, was going to be about What do you - you, as a society, that is - do with these creatures now that the war is OVER? Where and how do they fit in since they pretty obviously don't, you know, fit in anywhere?

Giant humanized hippos and giraffes and zebras, all trained to be mindless psychotic killing machines and now having to be acclimatized to and grafted onto human society. It works beautifully. As a reader, you've already - grudgingly - suspended your disbelief that it is even possible, in a Marvel and DC over-the-top kind of way, to take over the world with mutated giant humanized hippos and giraffes and zebras and rhinos and then, with the switch, you find that you don't have to. In HIP FLASK, Richard and Ladrönn looked back at you from behind the printed page and called, "C'mon - take over the world with a bunch of mutated killing machine anthropomorphics? How likely is that?"

I mean, you GET all that in the last nine pages of HIP FLASK and then you get a series of pin-ups of Hip who obviously gets acclimatized as a detective. And they're gorgeous pieces, moody, evocative and, yes, definitely looking for all the world like a Big Screen Summer Blockbuster



Motion Picture. I mean, no doubt there is a lot of blood, sweat and tears that went into this. These things don't just land on the page, but in terms of the way that it connects with the reader, the nearest analogies I can come up with are Alan Moore and Steve Bisette and John Totleben's SWAMP THING, Neil Gaiman's SANDMAN and Bill Willingham's FABLES. Once you get the context, you just want to see what the creators do with it next. Having nailed the context, all the creators have to do is to NOT SCREW IT UP. If it doesn't actually write itself, it's the nearest thing to it. The proof is that, at least for the foreseeable future, anytime I'm in a comic-book store, I'll be checking under "E" and not just waiting for the collections to come out... Yeah, you would THINK that I would be looking under "H" for HIP FLASK, but you'd be wrong. I'll be checking under "E"... er - for ELEPHANTMEN. It's a good example of how creative people can do really UN-rocket science like things with their intellectual properties that would give any marketing director the heebie-jeebies even to contemplate.

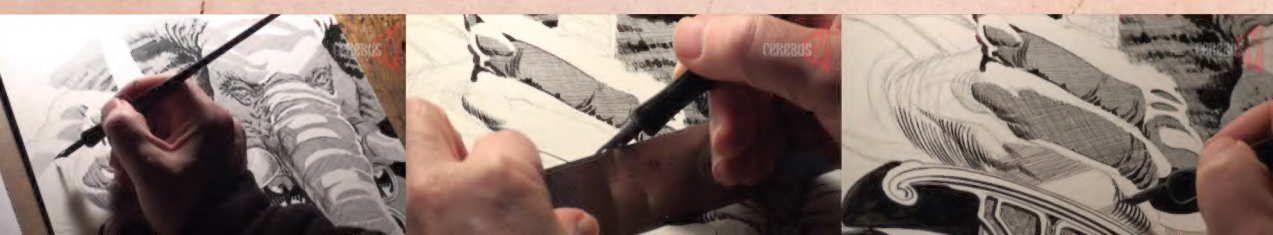
"Let me get this straight. You've built this brand, step-by-step over a period of years and now you want to..."

"Completely change the name. Or actually add a different name and use both of them."

[Rifle shot sound of marketing director's pencil snapping in two]

Obviously the property per se evolved way beyond its point of origin which, I suspect, was "Okay, I've got this Raymond Chandleresque Hippo called HIP FLASK that I've been using as a mascot for my lettering fonts company. Now, how do I make that concept plausible when I turn it into an actual comic book?" And Richard and Ladrönn brought so much of their best game to the table that the original idea, the Raymond Chandler Hippo isn't really in the same league. Believe me I can relate - try turning CEREBUS - the Funny Animal Conan - into a political and religious satire. So, what to do? Well, you have to rethink it and call it something that's a little closer to the Big Screen Summer Blockbuster it's evolved into. What would you call it if it was an ACTUAL Big Screen Summer Blockbuster? ELEPHANTMEN. Yeah. I can see that on the trailer now. ELEPHANTMEN. Coming to a theatre near you. Summer 2015.

EXTRACT FROM DAVE SIM'S BLOG AND MAIL, 2007



to RICHARD— with many THANKS!
DAVE SIM
3.3
2012

The STORY SO FAR...

HIP FLASK, EBONY HIDE and **OBADIAH HORN** are **ELEPHANTMEN**; human/animal hybrids and survivors of a war fought between Africa and China over the European countries ravaged by the deadly **FCN** virus. That war is long since over and over **15,000** Elephantmen have been rehabilitated by the United Nations and scattered throughout the globe to live peacefully among humans.

Flask and Hide work for the **INFORMATION AGENCY** as crime scene investigators, while Horn is the chairman and **CEO** of **HORN INDUSTRIES**, a global business dealing in imports, exports and real estate development. Perhaps the most celebrated Elephantmen of all, Horn's lifestyle, outspoken manner and his engagement to **U.N. Refugee** spokesperson **SAHARA**, have made him the subject of intense scrutiny by the media. Some suspect that his business dealings are not entirely legal, and it is true that those who speak out against him have been known to disappear without trace, or die in mysterious circumstances.

HANK GRUENWALD, director of the L.A arm of the Information Agency, has assigned Information-Agent-in-training **VANITY CASE** to help keep Hip Flask out of trouble, but perhaps overlooked Vanity's own tendency for getting into trouble.

The masked killer of Elephantmen known as **RAZORBACK** is dead, but not before taking down two of **LAPD**'s finest. Flask, Horn and the rest of the Elephantmen knew her as **YVETTE**, the leader of the French resistance in the war against China that they were bred to fight.

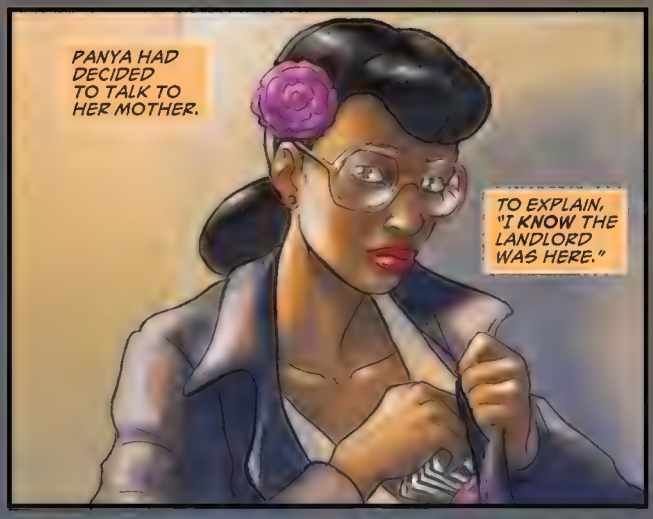
Much to the chagrin of Lieutenant **TRENCH**, a second killer, **THE SILENCER**, is still at large, and has been for years, holed up in **CASBAH JOE**'s **EYE OF THE NEEDLE** restaurant. Meantime, Sahara has announced to Horn that she is pregnant with his child, and Ebony Hide is recovering from a potentially fatal wound...

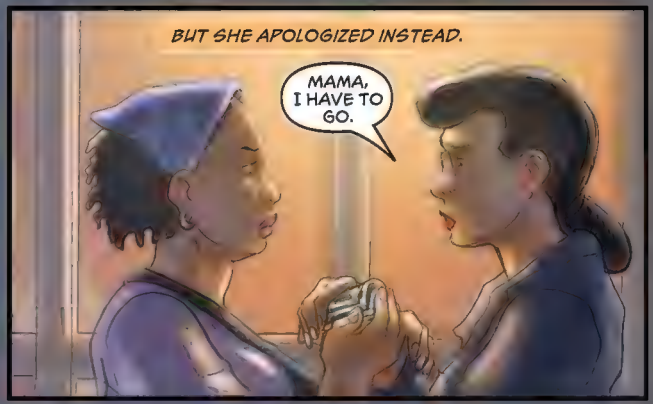
Damask Rose
By Any Other Name...
Aldridge • Medellin Roshell Starkings
AVATAR
RATED M / MATURE

"EARTHLY DESIRES ARE ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE SUFFERINGS OF LIFE AND DEATH ARE NIRVANA."

NICHIREN DAISHONIN

LOS ANGELES • 2257





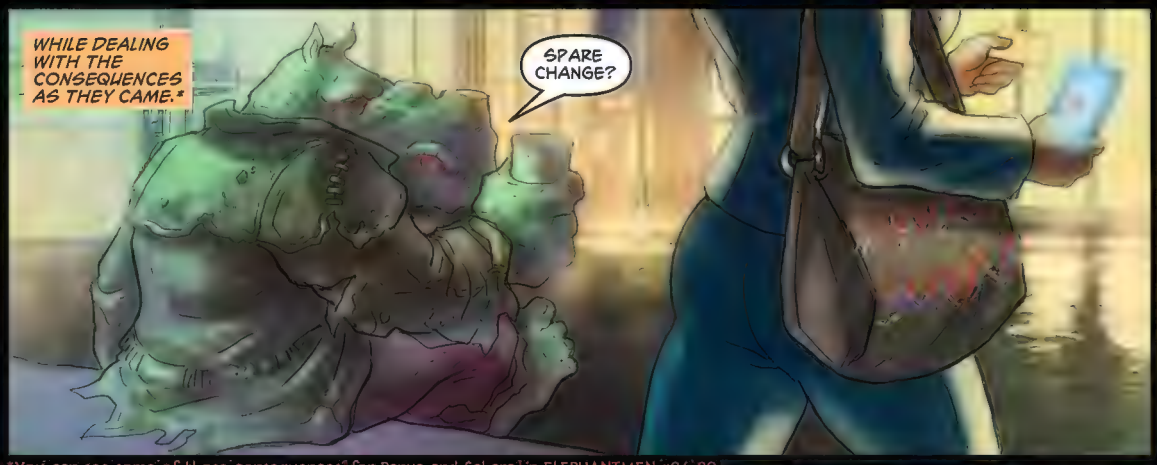
PANYA NEEDED TO FEEL SOMETHING FAMILIAR FIRST.
DIRT AND GRIME, CONCRETE PARTICLES UNDERNEATH HER FEET.
STRIPPER ROW, WHERE THE DANCE BEGAN.
A PLACE WHERE MOST ARE STILL FOR SALE.
HEY -- YOU.

GRANTED...
YEAH, I KNOW YOU.
SOME THINGS HERE SHE COULD HAPPILY LIVE WITHOUT.
PRETTY GIRL.
LIKE THE PERFUMED STENCH ...
OF FERRETING ATTRACTION FROM ANY SEX.
NICE HAIR FOR A PRETTY FACE.
SHE FELT HIS HOT GARGLING BREATH IN CRÈME DE MENTHE.
HE FELT HER CAUSE AND EFFECT.
DON'T.
ARRRGH!
TOUCH ME.
OKAY! OKAY!

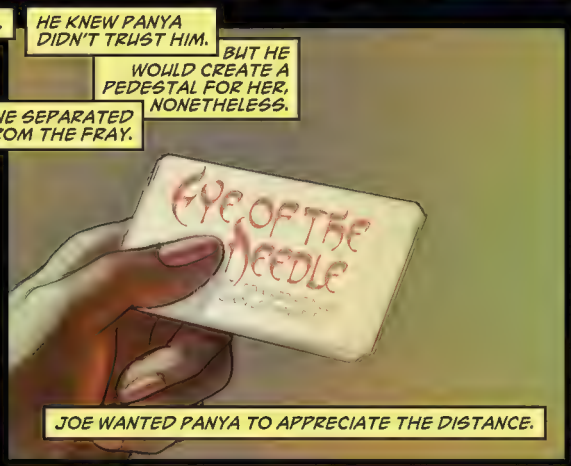
PANYA PREFERRED A LEVEL OF TRANSPARENCY WITH STRANGERS.
NO EXPLANATIONS NEEDED.
JUST THE DEAL.
SHE HAD TURNED INTO LIMESCALE AGAINST GROPERS AND HARD-ONS.
THE COST OF LIVING REQUIRED THE RIGHT DOLLAR SIGN.
THE CAMEL KNEW THAT.
HE KNEW WHAT WOULD MAKE HER SAY, "YES."
WELL, MISS TURKISH. LONG TIME.
LONG TIME INDEED.
HIYA, CHARLIE, HOW'S YOU?
I AM GOOD, MISS TURKISH. CAN'T COMPLAIN.
AND HOW ARE MY GIRLS?

"OH, THEY'RE WORKIN'."
PANYA USED TO WORK NIGHTS AT THE APOLLYON.

SHE FAVORED THE NAME "TURKISH."
AN ODE TO OLD-TIME DANCERS WHOSE MOVES WERE TOO EXOTIC FOR THEM TO BE CALLED STRIPPERS.
IT WAS WHY SHE WORE A ROSE IN HER HAIR, A DAMASCUS PINK.
"TELL THEM 'HELLO' FOR ME, CHARLIE."
PANYA WANTED TO REMEMBER HERSELF.
DESPITE THE CHOICE.
"I'LL TELL THEM YOU CAME BY."
TO BECOME SOMEONE ELSE.
THE CAMEL WANTED SOMEONE LIKE HER.
PANYA BORE A USEFUL RESEMBLANCE TO SAHARA.
CASBAH JOE WANTED TO TAKE THE BEST ADVANTAGE.



*You can see some of those consequences, for Panya and Sahara, in ELEPHANTMEN #26-29



JOE DEBATED THE CRUEL BEAUTY OF LIFE...
DESPERATE TIMES FOR DESPERATE MEASURES.
WHEN HE DECIDED TO IMPRESS HER.
MAKE HER WANT TO NEVER LEAVE.
WELCOME.
THANK YOU FOR COMING.
PANYA WOULD BE HIS...
TO CONTOUR AND MANEUVER.

LOOKING AT HER, THE CAMEL REMEMBERED AN OLD CHINESE PROVERB.
"A DIAMOND CANNOT BE POLISHED WITHOUT FRICTION..."
YOU LOOK BEAUTIFUL.
"NOR A MAN PERFECTED WITHOUT TRIALS."
AND JOE WAS WELL ADEPT AT WAITING.
AS LONG AS CONTROL WAS AS MUCH HIS.
SHE WOULD BE PERFECT.
PANYA, HOWEVER, COULD ONLY WHISPER TO HERSELF:
"ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS REMEMBER."
Damask Rose
Monifa Aldridge Words · Axel Medellin Pictures
Starkings Letters

STARKINGS · PARKER · BLOND · COOK
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ELEPHANTMEN
UNCOMMON ALLIES!
#40
$3.99
Tony Parker

"MEN SHOULD BE EITHER TREATED GENEROUSLY OR DESTROYED, BECAUSE THEY TAKE REVENGE FOR SLIGHT INJURIES -- FOR HEAVY ONES THEY CANNOT."

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI

THE CARDS ARE NEVER WRONG.
YET, EVERY TAROT READING FOR THE LAST FEW WEEKS, THOSE SAME TWO CARDS CROSSED IN HER SPREAD.
THE TOWER AND THE LOVERS. SURELY, THEY CAN MEAN ONLY ONE THING...
NO ONE, NOT EVEN SAHARA, KNOWS HOW CLOSE SHE CAME TO LAYING DOWN WITH OBADIAH HORN.*
OBADIAH, MY LOVE...
SAHARA...
SAHARA CHOSE PANYA TO STEP INTO HER SHOES... TO PROTECT SAHARA FROM PRYING EYES -- EVEN THOSE OF HER OWN FIANCÉE...
SAHARA HAS ASKED HER TO CARRY A CHILD FOR HER...
BUT WOULD SHE, COULD SHE, SLEEP IN SAHARA'S BED?
WHAT ELSE COULD IT MEAN?
THE CARDS ARE NEVER WRONG.
PHOOM
*See ELEPHANTMEN #29 & 30
THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE

LOS ANGELES • 2259

PHOOM

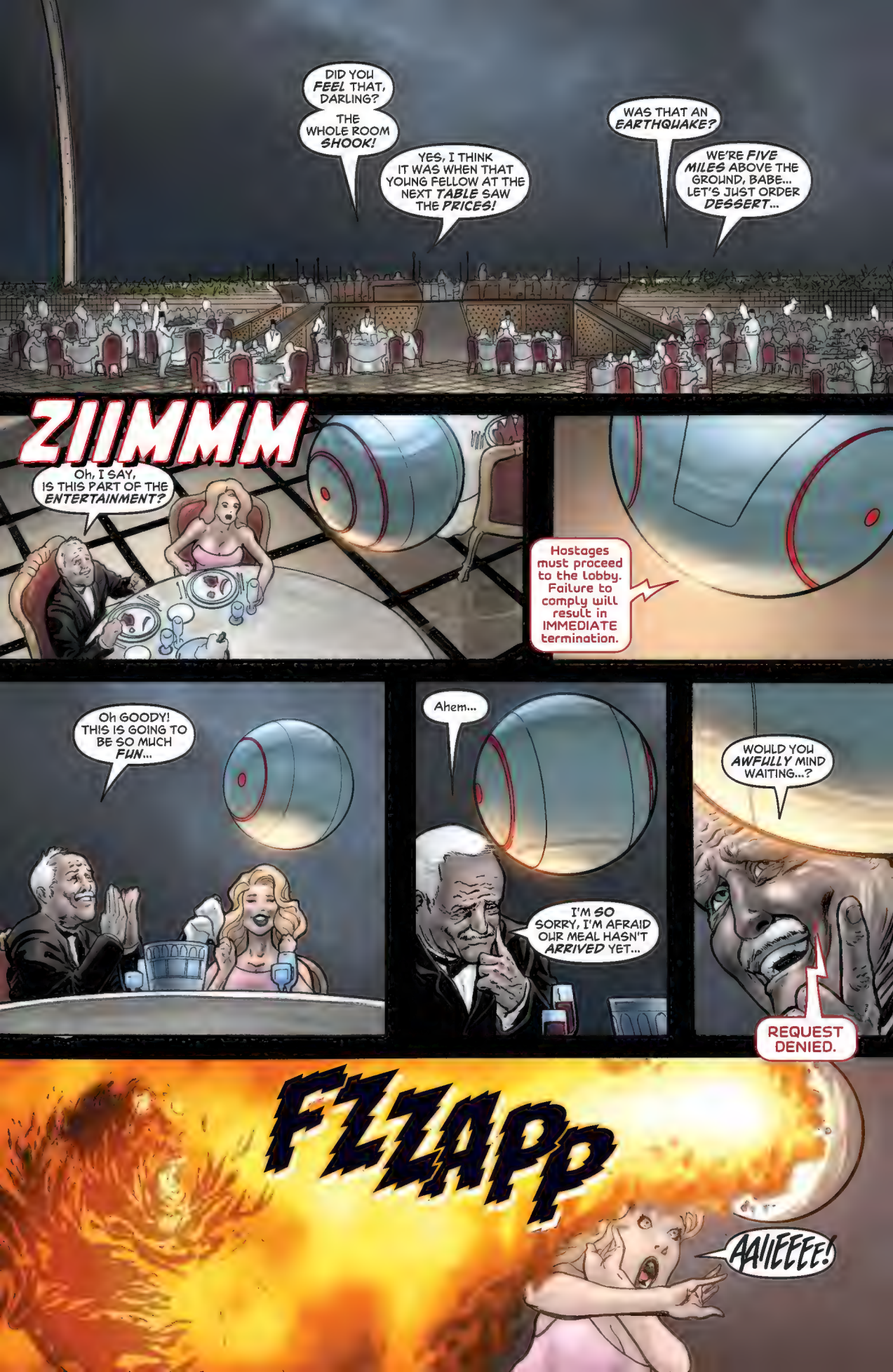
ONE IN THE EYE

Richard Starkings • Words
Tony Parker • Pictures
Blond • Colours
Chris Burnham • Nuthin'

Special Thanks to Monifa Dances

WHERE IS HE?!
WHERE IS THE MAN WHO KILLED MY DAUGHTER?
WHERE IS THE SILENCER?!
ZIIMMM
SHUNK
"THE SILENCER"?
DOES HE HAVE A RESERVATION WITH US THIS EVENING?

YOU THINK HE NEEDS A RESERVATION FOR THE NEXT LIFE?
PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN HIM AT HIS TABLE THERE, WISEASS?!
Oh, CRAP!
FIND HIM!
ZIMMMMM
ZIIMMM
ZIIIMM


DID YOU FEEL THAT, DARLING?
THE WHOLE ROOM SHOOK!
YES, I THINK IT WAS WHEN THAT YOUNG FELLOW AT THE NEXT TABLE SAW THE PRICES!
WAS THAT AN EARTHQUAKE?
WE'RE FIVE MILES ABOVE THE GROUND, BABE... LET'S JUST ORDER DESSERT...
ZIIMMM
Oh, I SAY, IS THIS PART OF THE ENTERTAINMENT?
Hostages must proceed to the lobby. Failure to comply will result in IMMEDIATE termination.
Oh GOODY! THIS IS GOING TO BE SO MUCH FUN...
Ahem...
I'M SO SORRY, I'M AFRAID OUR MEAL HASN'T ARRIVED YET...
WOULD YOU AWFULLY MIND WAITING...?
REQUEST DENIED.
FZZAPP
AAIIEEEE!

OHMIGOD!
Proceed to the lobby area and you will not be harmed.
WHERE'S THE FIRE EXIT?!
FIRE EXIT?!
HOW IN SEVEN SQUAKKING WORLDS OF HELL WOULD THERE BE A SQUAKKING FIRE EXIT ON A FLOATING RESTAURANT?!
Hostages must proceed to the lobby. Failure to comply will result in IMMEDIATE termination.
DESTINY WAS RIGHT.* DADDY FOUND ME.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #16
I GUESS I'M GOING TO THE LOBBY AREA...
...WITH A COUPLE OF MY FRIENDS...
BUT I THINK I'LL TAKE THE SCENIC ROUTE.

I DON'T CARE FOR YOU, CASBAH JOE.
I DON'T CARE FOR YOUR KIND.
BUT AS LONG AS YOU MUNTS KNOW YOUR PLACE, I CAN LIVE AND LET LIVE.
HOWEVER, LET ME TELL YOU A FEW THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT MY FORMER EMPLOYEE.
"THE SILENCER CAME TO NEW YORK OVER TEN YEARS AGO. A GUN FOR HIRE. AND AN EXPENSIVE ONE AT THAT.
"NEVERTHELESS, I NEEDED PROTECTION -- NOT FOR MYSELF, FOR MY DAUGHTERS...
"DESTINY.
"HARMONY.
"MY ANGELS.
"THE FIRST PERSON THEY NEEDED PROTECTION FROM WAS THEIR MOTHER, RHAPSODY...
"RHAPSODY BY NAME, RHAPSODY BY NATURE... AND I HAD LEARNED THAT MY WIFE PLAYED A TUNE THAT SHE DANCED TO WITH ANY MAN WHO CAUGHT HER CURIOSITY.
"THE SILENCER STOPPED HER MUSIC.

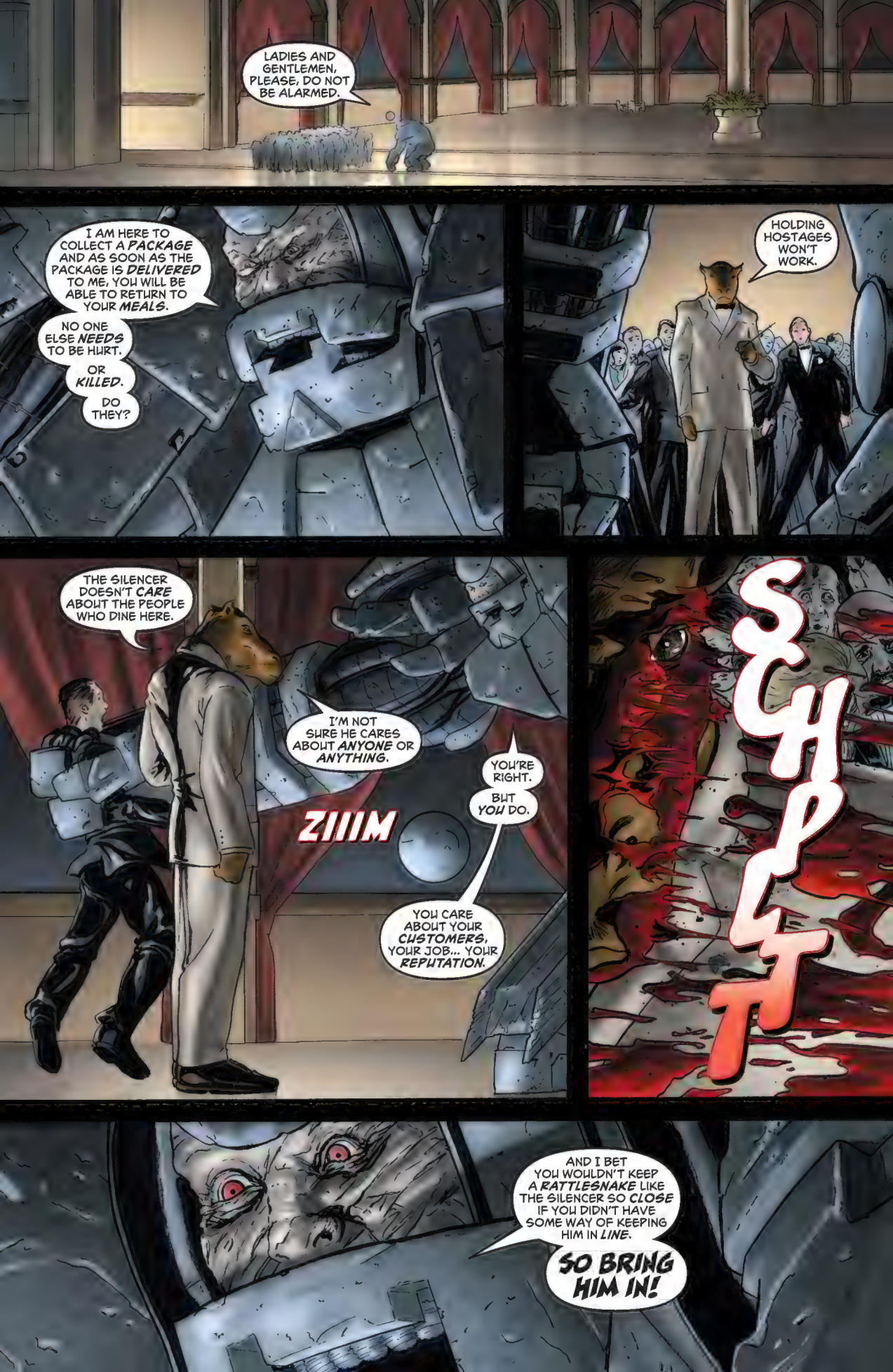
I COULDN'T HAVE... DONE THAT MYSELF.
BUT I DON'T MISS HER.
I NEEDED SOMEONE AS COLD AND CALCULATING AS I WAS TO KEEP MY DAUGHTERS OUT OF TROUBLE.
"HARMONY, IN PARTICULAR, EXCELLED AT GETTING INTO TROUBLE.
"I EMPOWERED THE SILENCER TO ENSURE SHE NEVER MADE THE SAME MISTAKE TWICE.
"OF COURSE, EVEN AS MY DAUGHTER LEARNED TO FEAR THE SILENCER, SHE ALSO LEARNED TO RESPECT HIM... ADMIRE HIM...
"SHE MAY HAVE LOVED HIM.
"MAYBE HER MOTHER LOVED ME IN MUCH THE SAME WAY.
"ALAS, HARMONY WAS MUCH LIKE HER MOTHER IN OTHER WAYS TOO.
"PERHAPS WORSE.
"HE KNEW I WOULDN'T WANT HIM TO KILL HER...

"SO HE CUT HER. SO THAT SHE WOULD KEEP HER SILENCE.
"AND WHEN HE TOLD ME OF HER... ACTIVITIES, I CONSIDERED THE PUNISHMENT SUITABLE.
"WHY WOULD I WANT HER TO TALK?
"I SENT HER AWAY, TO A WILDERNESS RETREAT IN UTAH, TO LEARN THE ERROR OF HER WAYS.
"LITTLE REALIZING THAT HER SISTER'S MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE WOULD ONLY MAKE THE SILENCER EVEN MORE INTRIGUING TO HARMONY'S SISTER, DESTINY.
"IT HAD NEVER OCCURRED TO ME THAT THE SILENCER HAD LAID A FINGER ON HARMONY...
"OR THAT HE WOULD BE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO GET INVOLVED WITH DESTINY, TOO.
" I WAS THE TYPICAL ABSENT FATHER, AND PERHAPS ALL THEY WANTED WAS MY ATTENTION, RIGHT?
"MY ANGELS.
"SLUTS.
"SO WHEN, ONE NIGHT, THE SILENCER DISAPPEARED. DESTINY GOT MY ATTENTION ALL RIGHT.
"SHE TOLD ME EVERYTHING.
"I WENT OVER TO HIS APARTMENT TO TEAR THE PLACE APART PERSONALLY. THERE HAD TO BE SOME CLUE AS TO HIS WHEREABOUTS...
"HE'D LEFT ME A NOTE....
BOOM

IF SOMEONE GOES TO THE TROUBLE OF WRITING, IT'S IMPOLITE NOT TO RESPOND.
I'M HERE TO HAND DELIVER MY REPLY.
CRAP, CRAP, CRAP!
HE COULD BRING DOWN THE WHOLE HOUSE...
THINK, PANYA, THINK... IT'S NOT ENOUGH RIGHT NOW TO SIMPLY LOOK LIKE SAHARA...
WHAT WOULD SAHARA DO?
SHE'D ACT.
ZIM

IF THOSE TOMATONS ARE LOOKING FOR ME...
BIP BIP
I WONDER IF THEY CAN *FIND* WHAT CAN'T BE *SEEN*.
ZUM
KRAKT
PFFT
FOOM
HOLY HELL!
ZIM
Assailant on rooftop. Intercept and NEUTRALIZE!

Hostages must proceed to the lobby. Failure to comply will result in IMMEDIATE termination.
ZIMM
COME AND GET ME!
SHTOOM
WELL THAT WASN'T SO HARD...


LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE, DO NOT BE ALARMED.
I AM HERE TO COLLECT A PACKAGE AND AS SOON AS THE PACKAGE IS DELIVERED TO ME, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO RETURN TO YOUR MEALS.
NO ONE ELSE NEEDS TO BE HURT.
OR KILLED.
DO THEY?
HOLDING HOSTAGES WON'T WORK.
THE SILENCER DOESN'T CARE ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO DINE HERE.
I'M NOT SURE HE CARES ABOUT ANYONE OR ANYTHING.
ZIIIM
YOU'RE RIGHT.
BUT YOU DO.
YOU CARE ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS, YOUR JOB... YOUR REPUTATION.
SCHLAT
AND I BET YOU WOULDN'T KEEP A RATTLESNAKE LIKE THE SILENCER SO CLOSE IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE SOME WAY OF KEEPING HIM IN LINE.
SO BRING HIM IN!

HUFF
HUFF
ENGINE ROOM
PFFT
PFFT
ZIMMMMMM

SOLDIERS... I NEED YOU!
SAHARA?
VERY WELL...
I BELIEVE I HAVE JUST THE THING...
BIP BIP
...TO BRING OUR FRIEND INTO FOCUS...
ZUM
HUNH??!
MY SUIT!

SCHWIPP
SCHWAP
UHH!
SHUP
OUFF!
ZIIMMM
ZIIMMM
AHHHH!

*See ELEPHANTMEN #16 & 36

*See ELEPHANTMEN #34

ARRHHH
THRUNCH
SHOOM
ZIIIM
URHK!

HERE.
THANKS.
BLAM
BLAM
GET BEHIND ME...
I SAVED YOUR BEHIND!
I CAN HANDLE MYSELF!
THE SILENCER AND PANYA. UNLIKELY ALLIES...
BUT DESPERATE TIMES REQUIRE DESPERATE MEASURES...

WHNCH
SHE HAD COUNTED ON THIS...
COUNTED ON HER RESEMBLANCE TO SAHARA.
SHE KNEW THAT THEY ALL LOVED HER...
ALL THE ELEPHANTMEN.
WHH
SHE KNEW THAT THEY WOULD EVEN KILL FOR HER...
NO... NO, PLEASE... DON'T--
SHE LIKED THAT.

AHHH!
AAAAAAHHH
SHUKT
FOOM

MY FRIENDS! I AM TERRIBLY SORRY.
THERE WILL BE NO CHARGE FOR YOUR MEALS TONIGHT...
...WE WILL, OF COURSE, INFORM THE PROPER AUTHORITIES IMMEDIATELY...
THANK YOU.
MEANTIME, PLEASE PROCEED TO THE VALET STATION WHERE MEMBERS OF MY STAFF WILL RETURN YOUR VEHICLES TO YOU.
PANYA.
I DON'T WANT YOUR THANKS.
I'M NOT OFFERING ANY.
YOU BROUGHT THIS ON US! YOU DISGUST ME -- !
NO I DON'T.

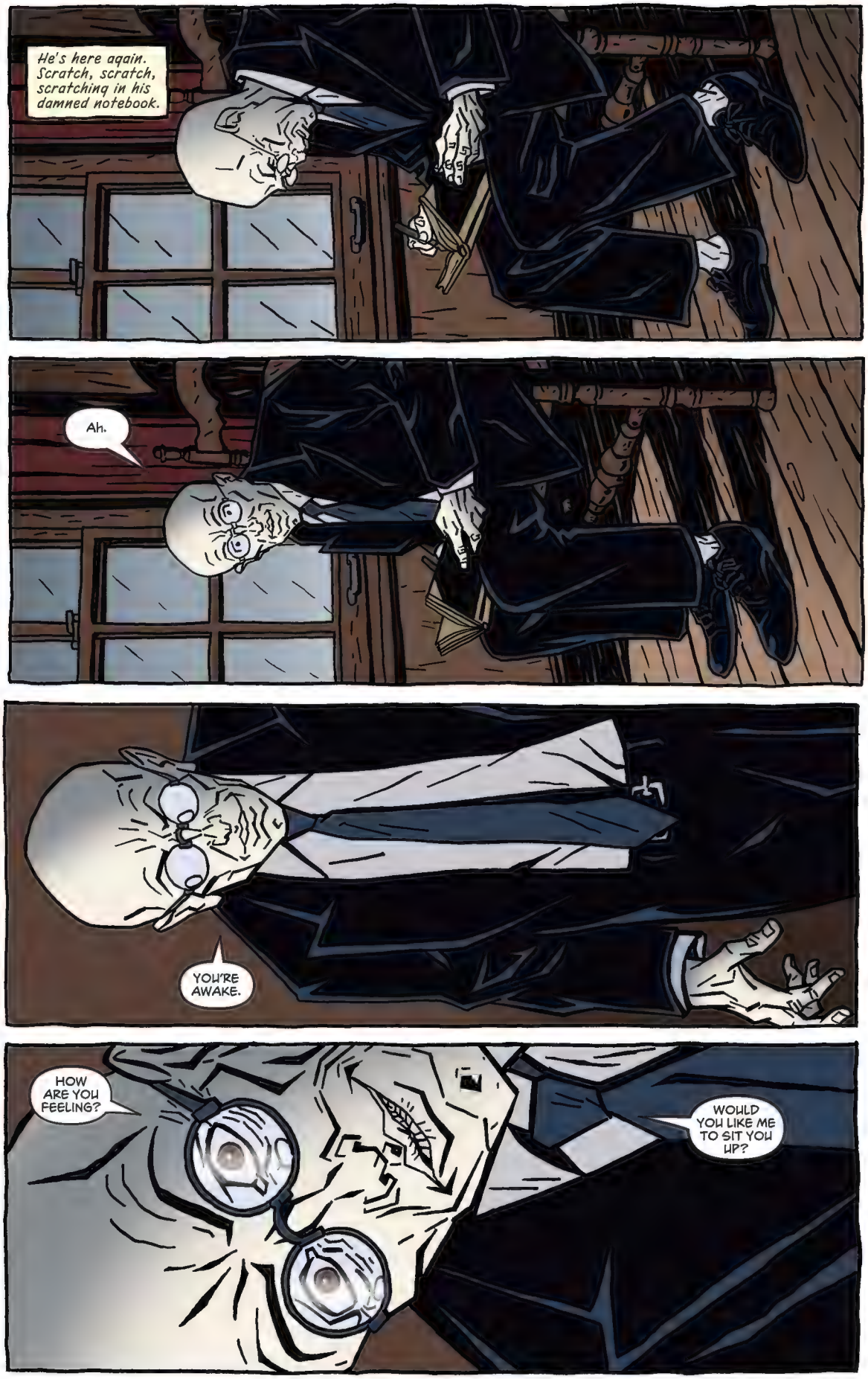
NEXT

THE LONG & GHASTLY KITCHEN

ELEPHANTMEN
The LONG & GHASTLY KITCHEN
#41
$3.99
JAVIER RUEDA
HINE · STEEN · STARKINGS · COOK
20

"EACH DAY IS A LITTLE LIFE: EVERY WAKING AND RISING A LITTLE BIRTH, EVERY FRESH MORNING A LITTLE YOUTH, EVERY GOING TO REST AND SLEEP A LITTLE DEATH."

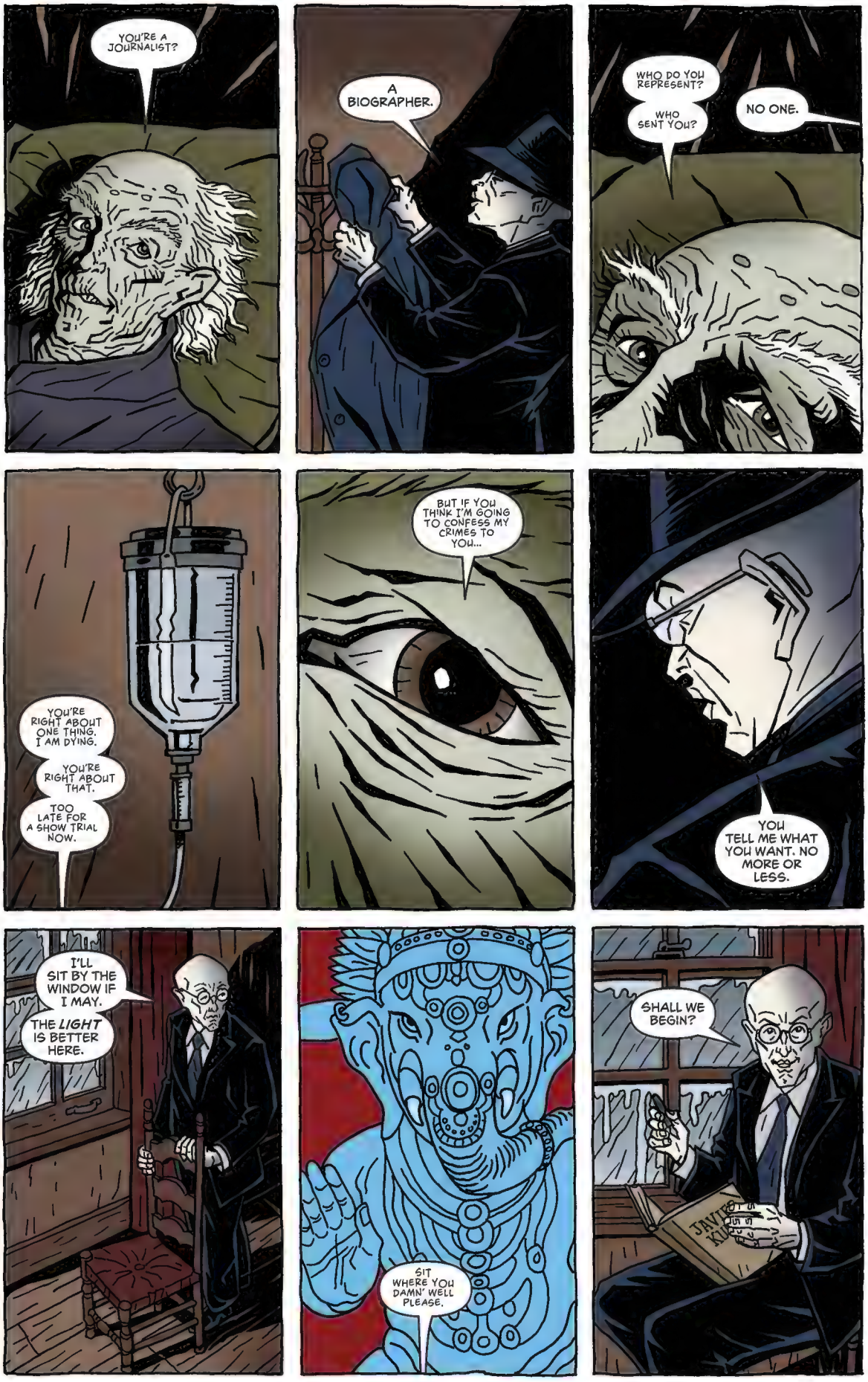
ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER


He's here again. Scratch, scratch, scratching in his damned notebook.
Ah.
YOU'RE AWAKE.
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO SIT YOU UP?

WHHRRRRR
WHERE'S THAT DAMNED WOMAN?
ELSA HAS GONE HOME. I TOLD HER TO TAKE THE REST OF THE DAY OFF.
WE WON'T BE NEEDING HER.
WE'LL BE FINISHED TODAY.

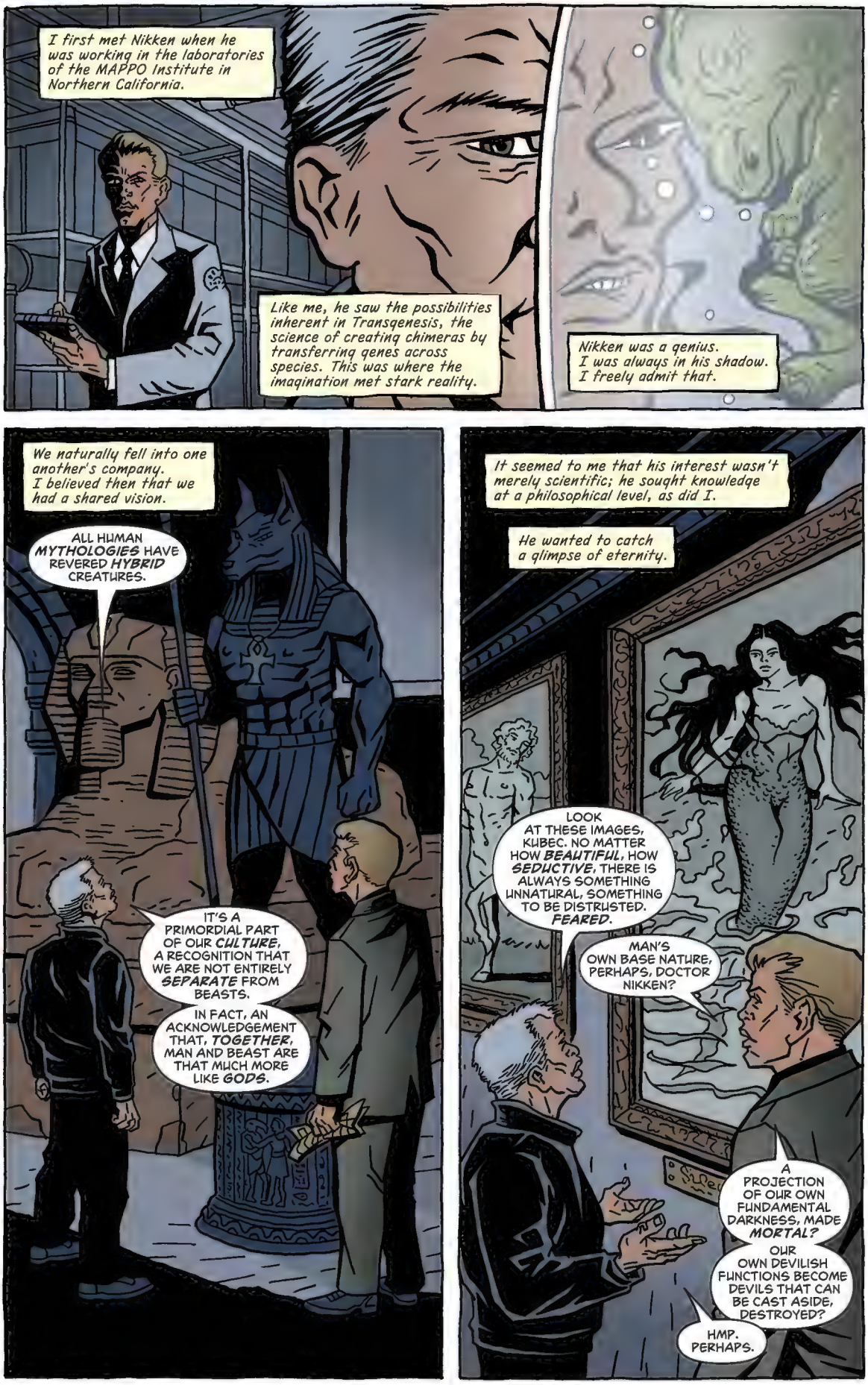
He turned up out of nowhere in the middle of a storm four months ago.
I'VE COME TO SEE THE MAN WHO CALLS HIMSELF CLAUDE BERNARD.
MISTER BERNARD WON'T SEE ANYONE. HE'S VERY STRICT ABOUT THAT.
NO VISITORS.
HE'LL SEE ME.
WAIT! WHO SHALL I SAY--?
I'LL INTRODUCE MYSELF.
He stood outside my door for several minutes. I could hear the rain dripping onto the floor like fingers drumming impatiently on a table.
Then the creak of the door.
A draught on my cheek.
The smell of damp cloth.

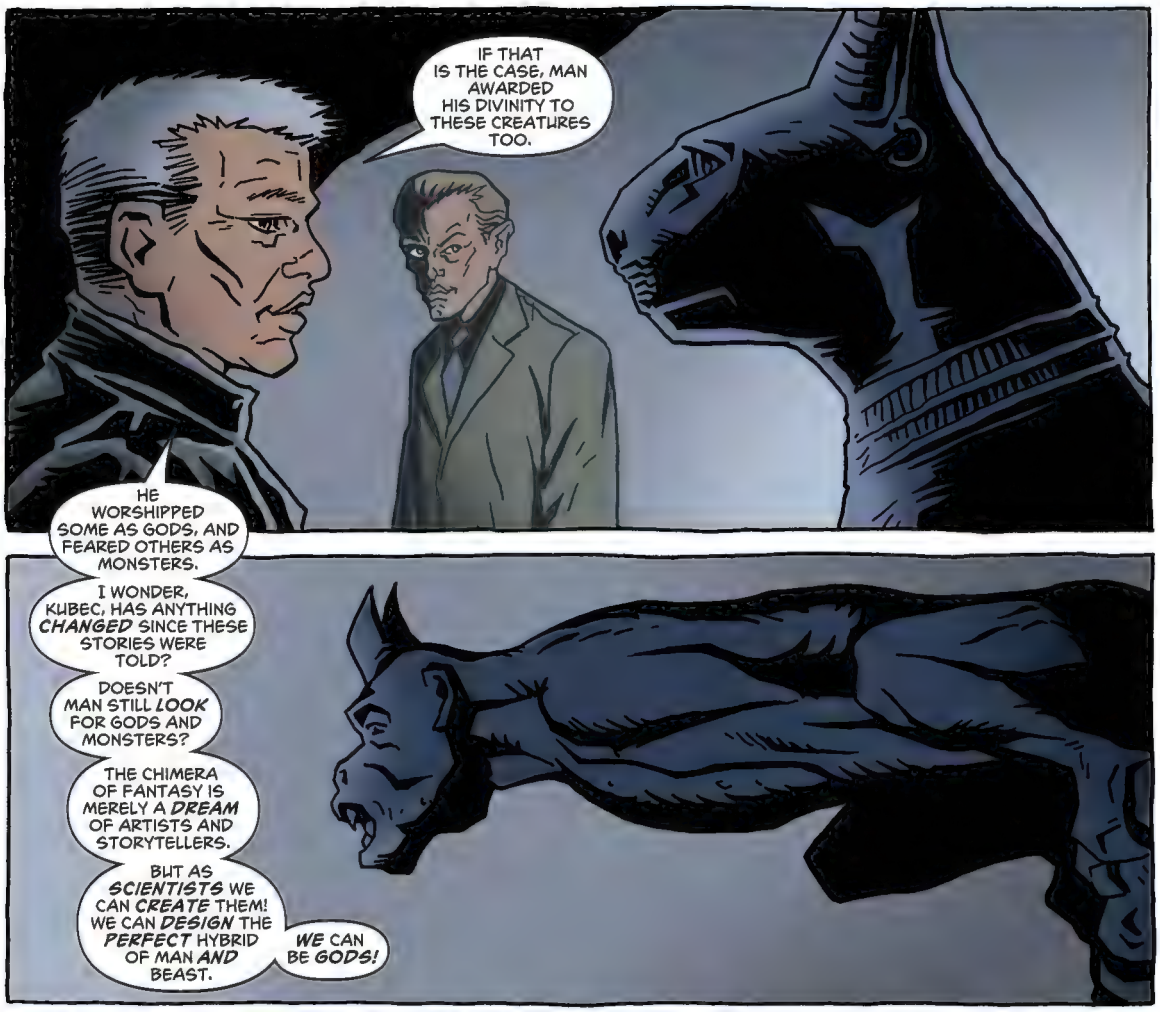
JAVIER KUBEC.
THAT'S NOT MY NAME.
YOU ARE JAVIER KUBEC, FORMER DEPUTY HEAD OF RESEARCH FOR MAPPO AND CHIEF ASSISTANT TO DOCTOR KAZUSHI NIKKEN. YOU ARE WANTED BY THE UNITED NATIONS WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL FOR TORTURE AND GENOCIDE.
YOU HAVE BEEN CHARGED IN YOUR ABSENCE WITH COMPLICITY IN THE DEATHS OF THOUSANDS OF WOMEN, CASUALTIES OF THE ELEPHANTMEN PRODUCTION PROGRAM.
YOU HAVE BEEN HIDING UNDER THE ASSUMED NAME OF CLAUDE BERNARD FOR TWENTY YEARS. YOU ARE DYING FROM LUNG CANCER AND YOU HAVE LESS THAN SIX MONTHS TO LIVE.
NO. NO. THIS IS LIES.
I'M HERE TO RECORD YOUR LIFE.
JAVIER KUBEC

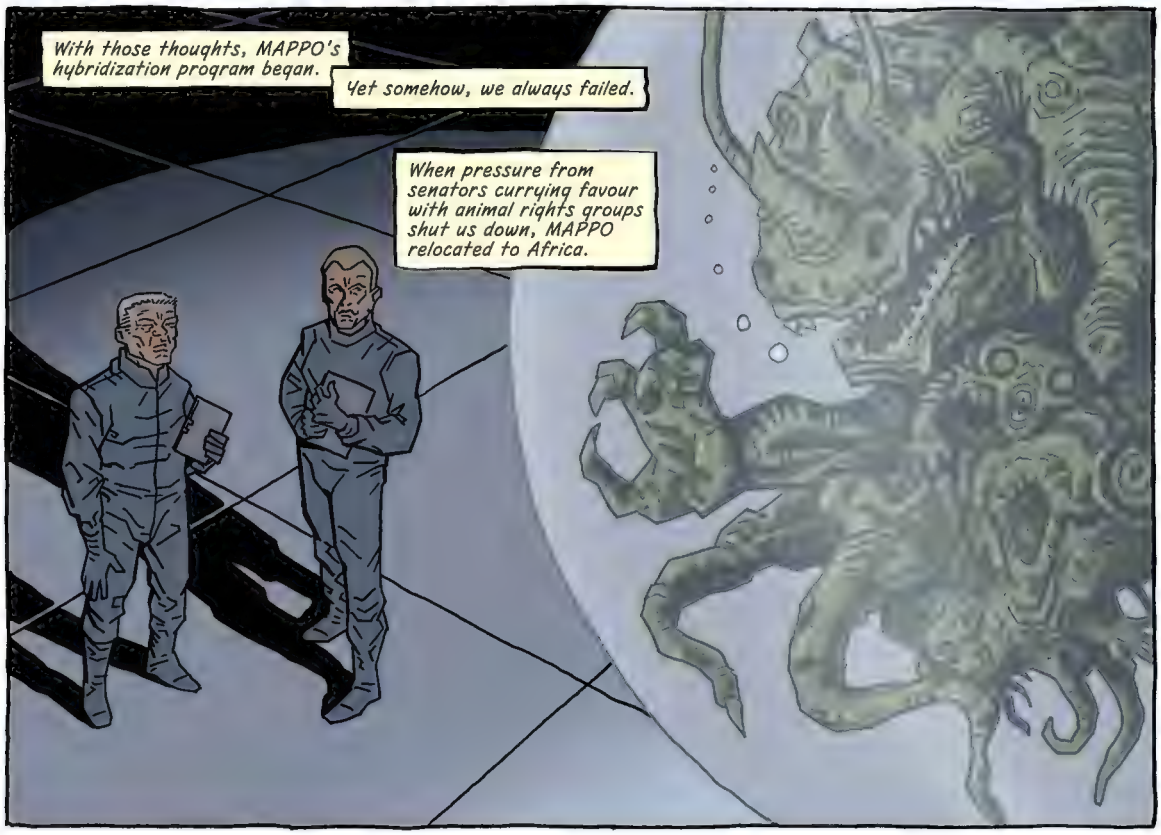

YOU'RE A JOURNALIST?
A BIOGRAPHER.
WHO DO YOU REPRESENT?
WHO SENT YOU?
NO ONE.
YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING. I AM DYING.
YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT.
TOO LATE FOR A SHOW TRIAL NOW.
BUT IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO CONFESS MY CRIMES TO YOU...
YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT. NO MORE OR LESS.
I'LL SIT BY THE WINDOW IF I MAY.
THE *LIGHT* IS BETTER HERE.
SIT WHERE YOU DAMN' WELL PLEASE.
SHALL WE BEGIN?

He said nothing more.
He simply waited.
I didn't speak for a long while. I have kept my silence for so many years it has become a habit that is hard to break.
Once I began, it was easy.
I can see the appeal of the deathbed confession. Not that I fear going to hell. I have never given much credence to the idea of an afterlife, but I did feel the need to set the record straight.
I have read the media reports that have defined me as a monster. I have been judged in my absence. Judged by ignorant hypocrites.
So I told him of my youth.

I told him of my fascination with animals.
I used art to define the infinite variety of form.
Science to explore their function.
In biology classes at high school, I participated with enthusiasm in the dissection of small mammals.
Many of my classmates were repelled by the peeling back of the raw tissues, glistening with blood and fat to uncover the bones, the organs, the entrails.
To me it was a revelation.
Each animal has qualities that make it unique, superior to humanity in so many ways. All they lacked was the intellect, the knowledge of self.
That alone sets homo sapiens above the rest of nature.


I first met Nikken when he was working in the laboratories of the MAPPO Institute in Northern California.
Like me, he saw the possibilities inherent in Transgenesis, the science of creating chimeras by transferring genes across species. This was where the imagination met stark reality.
Nikken was a genius. I was always in his shadow. I freely admit that.
We naturally fell into one another's company. I believed then that we had a shared vision.
ALL HUMAN MYTHOLOGIES HAVE REVERED HYBRID CREATURES.
IT'S A PRIMORDIAL PART OF OUR CULTURE, A RECOGNITION THAT WE ARE NOT ENTIRELY SEPARATE FROM BEASTS.
IN FACT, AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT, TOGETHER, MAN AND BEAST ARE THAT MUCH MORE LIKE GODS.
It seemed to me that his interest wasn't merely scientific; he sought knowledge at a philosophical level, as did I.
He wanted to catch a glimpse of eternity.
LOOK AT THESE IMAGES, KUBEC. NO MATTER HOW BEAUTIFUL, HOW SEDUCTIVE, THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING UNNATURAL, SOMETHING TO BE DISTRUSTED. FEARED.
MAN'S OWN BASE NATURE, PERHAPS, DOCTOR NIKKEN?
A PROJECTION OF OUR OWN FUNDAMENTAL DARKNESS, MADE MORTAL?
OUR OWN DEVILISH FUNCTIONS BECOME DEVILS THAT CAN BE CAST ASIDE, DESTROYED?
HMP. PERHAPS.


IF THAT IS THE CASE, MAN AWARDED HIS DIVINITY TO THESE CREATURES TOO.
HE WORSHIPPED SOME AS GODS, AND FEARED OTHERS AS MONSTERS.
I WONDER, KUBEC, HAS ANYTHING *CHANGED* SINCE THESE STORIES WERE TOLD?
DOESN'T MAN STILL *LOOK* FOR GODS AND MONSTERS?
THE CHIMERA OF FANTASY IS MERELY A *DREAM* OF ARTISTS AND STORYTELLERS.
BUT AS *SCIENTISTS* WE CAN *CREATE* THEM! WE CAN *DESIGN* THE *PERFECT* HYBRID OF MAN *AND* BEAST.
WE CAN BE *GODS!*


With those thoughts, MAPPO's hybridization program began.
Yet somehow, we always failed.
When pressure from senators currying favour with animal rights groups shut us down, MAPPO relocated to Africa.

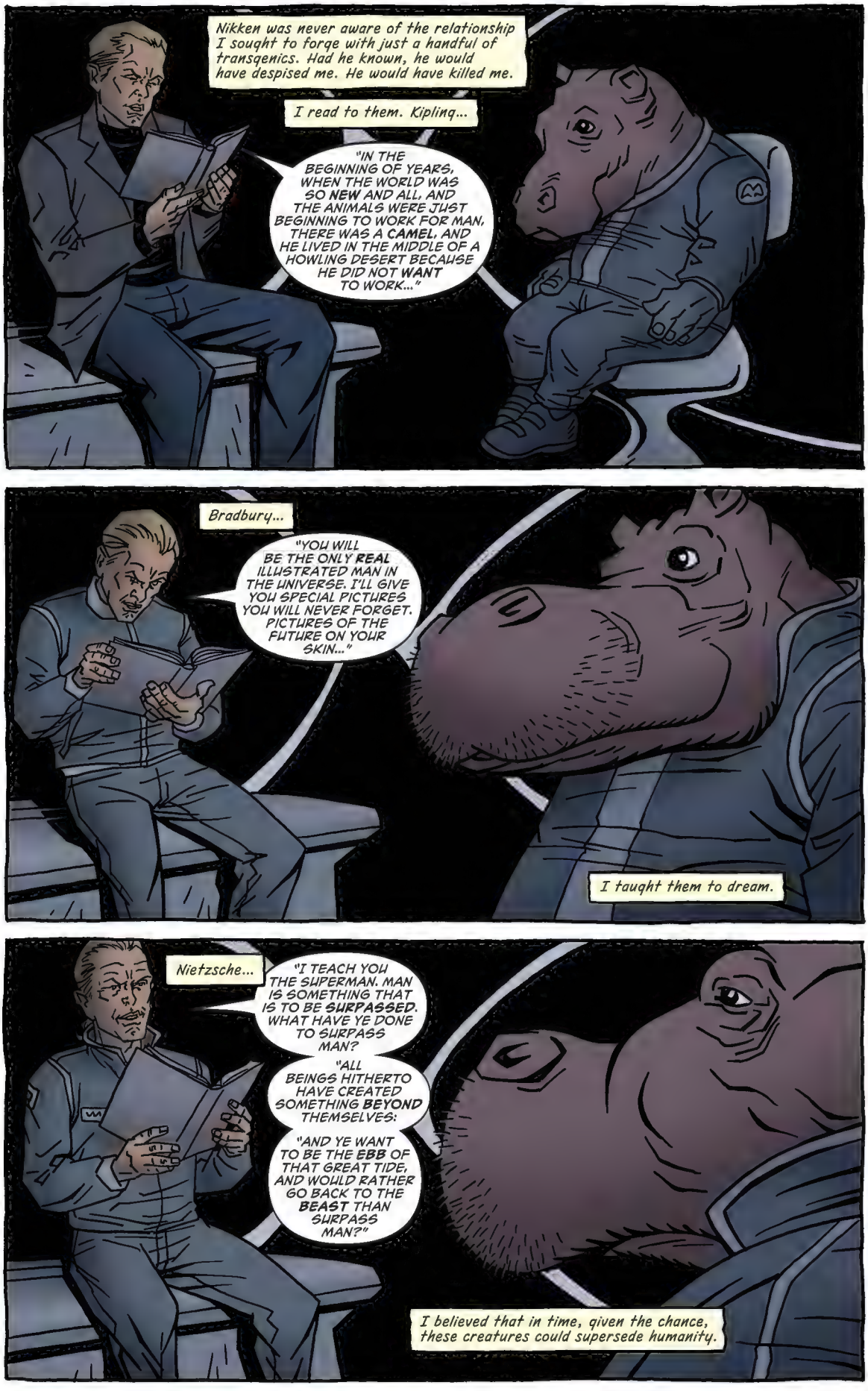
There, human life came with a cheaper price tag and MAPPO was able to operate with practically no oversight.
We have been labelled criminals. I do not reject that truth. We caused monstrous acts. Innocent women were taken from their homes, their families.
Nikken didn't feel their pain as I did. It was necessary for me to acknowledge it. There can be no progress without suffering. No act of creation without destruction.
We used them and cast them aside.

We served a higher purpose.
We created life out of death.
We succeeded. Nikken succeeded.
Man become God.

But how like a man, to bring out the animal in an animal.

The money came from the Central African Alliance. They were only interested in our transgenics as a resource. As weapons. So they were trained to kill, to be feared. They were the unnatural, untrustworthy chimeras Nikken had described to me years before.

Like the God of Abraham, Nikken denied free will to the beings he had made. He saw himself as their creator, their father.
A cruel father. An unforgiving god.


Nikken was never aware of the relationship I sought to forge with just a handful of transgenics. Had he known, he would have despised me. He would have killed me.
I read to them. Kipling...
"IN THE BEGINNING OF YEARS, WHEN THE WORLD WAS SO NEW AND ALL, AND THE ANIMALS WERE JUST BEGINNING TO WORK FOR MAN, THERE WAS A CAMEL, AND HE LIVED IN THE MIDDLE OF A HOWLING DESERT BECAUSE HE DID NOT WANT TO WORK..."
Bradbury...
"YOU WILL BE THE ONLY REAL ILLUSTRATED MAN IN THE UNIVERSE. I'LL GIVE YOU SPECIAL PICTURES YOU WILL NEVER FORGET. PICTURES OF THE FUTURE ON YOUR SKIN..."
I taught them to dream.
Nietzsche...
"I TEACH YOU THE SUPERMAN. MAN IS SOMETHING THAT IS TO BE SURPASSED. WHAT HAVE YE DONE TO SURPASS MAN?
"ALL BEINGS HITHERTO HAVE CREATED SOMETHING BEYOND THEMSELVES:
"AND YE WANT TO BE THE EBB OF THAT GREAT TIDE, AND WOULD RATHER GO BACK TO THE BEAST THAN SURPASS MAN?"
I believed that in time, given the chance, these creatures could supersede humanity.

How wrong I was.

It was a relief when the Elephantmen were liberated.
Perhaps I should have faced my accusers in court, but I knew I would never receive a fair trial.
I paid for a new identity and hid myself away.
A QUESTION. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE NAME OF CLAUDE BERNARD?
NH
Because we all followed in his bloody footsteps.
Bernard popularised the use of vivisection as the core of the scientific method. He understood that all living creatures are bound by the same laws and he set out to prove his theories by observation.
To do that he had to inflict enormous suffering upon his animal subjects. But he knew that he had no choice. His methods and discoveries inspired generations of scientists.

YET ONE OF BERNARD'S CLOSEST COLLEAGUES SAID THAT HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO SEE NOT ONLY SCIENCE, BUT THE WHOLE OF MANKIND PERISH, IF IT TOOK ANIMAL VIVISECTION TO SAVE IT.
And what did that man achieve? History has forgotten him. Make no mistake, Bernard recognised the horror of what he was doing.
He said
"THE SCIENCE OF LIFE IS A SUPERB AND DAZZLINGLY LIGHTED HALL WHICH MAY BE REACHED ONLY BY PASSING THROUGH A LONG AND GHASTLY KITCHEN."
BUT I SEE THAT YOU HAVE ALREADY JUDGED ME...
MY TASK IS SIMPLY TO RECORD. I DON'T PASS JUDGEMENT.
HOWEVER, IT IS WITHIN MY REMIT TO CREATE A POETIC END TO YOUR LIFE.
WHILE YOU SLEPT, I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF REPLACING YOUR MORPHINE DRIP.

BY NOW, I IMAGINE YOUR DISEASED ORGANS ARE CAUSING SOME DISCOMFORT.
GRADUALLY THAT DISCOMFORT WILL BECOME PAIN SUCH AS YOU HAVE NEVER IMAGINED.
IT WILL CONSUME YOU...
IT WILL CUT INTO YOU AND TRANSFORM YOU.
POSSIBLY YOU WILL FIND THE EXPERIENCE TRANSCENDENT AS DID THE CATHOLIC MARTYRS.
DAMN YOU! I'M NOT A SAINT OR A MYSTIC, I'M A SCIENTIST! I DON'T SEE VISIONS!
Oh, I THINK YOU WILL. I REPLACED YOUR MORPHINE WITH A DISTILLATION OF A RARE HYBRID FORM OF PEYOTE.
IT HAS BEEN CULTIVATED BY THE HUICHOL PEOPLE OF MEXICO FOR GENERATIONS. THEY USE A MILDER FORM OF THE DRUG IN THEIR RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES.

YOU WILL BE *DEAD* BEFORE THE SUN RISES.
HOWEVER, FOR THOSE FINAL HOURS, WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, YOU WILL BE IN A *VISIONARY* STATE.
I HOPE IT WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTEMPLATE ALL THE CAUSES YOU MADE, TO *EMPATHIZE* WITH THE SUFFERING *YOU* INFLICTED ON YOUR SUBJECTS.
His words become ponderous. I would curse him, but I can no longer speak, or even turn my head. Only my eyes still move, rotating to follow his movements.
CALL IT AN *EXPERIMENT* IF YOU PREFER.
AN EXPERIMENT OF WHICH *YOU ALONE* WILL KNOW THE RESULT.
YOU HAVE SOMETHING IN YOU, KUBEC, SOMETHING THAT SEPARATED YOU FROM *NIKKEN* AND PREVENTED YOU FROM ACHIEVING GREATNESS.
YOUR *CONSCIENCE*.
As he leaves, even the passage of light seems to slow down.

The room grows dark.

I am in another place.

The pain is more than I can bear in silence.

The Elephantmen strain against the chains that bind them, spitting rage as I crawl forward.

My screams are echoed by cries of agony from tortured creatures writhing in the shadows.

Is this the vision he was talking about? Is this the pricking of my conscience?

Scalpels, my instruments of science and torture. The tools I used to uncover the truth, turned against me.

Oh yes, there is poetry in this storyteller's justice.

The ground beneath my hands and feet is as soft and warm as living tissue, but wherever I touch it, spikes leap up and penetrate my flesh.

The wounds heal before my eyes, but the pain grows greater, more acute, every nerve ending screaming.

There is a lighted hall at the end of this ghastly chamber, but the doorway seems to grow more distant as I move towards it.

THE DRUG AFFECTS ONE'S PERCEPTION OF TIME.
IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES, THE PASSAGE OF THE HOURS CAN BE SLOWED ALMOST INDEFINITELY.
A LIFE MAY BE PONDERED, MOMENTS RELIVED, SAVOURED.
FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LIVED A GOOD LIFE, IT CAN BE A GIFT.
FOR OTHERS, THE TORMENT WOULD BE UNIMAGINABLE.
IT HAS BEEN SEVERAL HOURS SINCE I LEFT HIM.

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN FOR HIM?
A MONTH?
SIX MONTHS?
A YEAR?
OR HAS TIME SIMPLY CEASED TO HAVE ANY MEANING AT ALL?

HAS HE PERHAPS CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF ETERNITY?

WRITER & ARTIST DAVID HINE ALONG WITH ROB STEEN & RICHARD STARKINGS COLOUR ARTIST LETTERING ARTIST/EDITOR

TOOK YOU INTO

THE LONG AND GHASTLY KITCHEN

SLEEPING PARTNERS
PART ONE
ELEPHANTMEN
20
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$3.00
STARKINGS • MEDELLIN • DAVE SIM • FRISON

"TO HOPE MEANS TO BE READY AT EVERY MOMENT FOR THAT WHICH IS NOT YET BORN, AND YET NOT BECOME DESPERATE IF THERE IS NO BIRTH IN OUR LIFETIME."

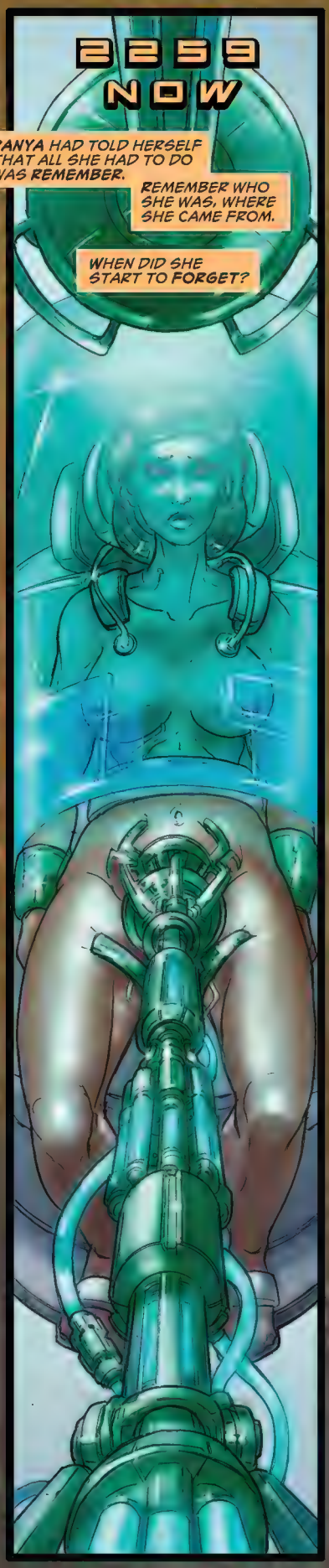
ERICH FROMM

THE ASSASSIN.
THE SILENCER.
PANYA HATED HIM.
DEATH

2010

OHIO SENATE VOTES TO BAN MINOTAURS

Ronald Bailey
June 3rd 2010



The Ohio Christian Alliance made the following statement: "For the past seven years, we have been working tirelessly with members of the Legislature to ban EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH, HUMAN CLONING, and, in recent years, ANIMAL-HUMAN HYBRID.

"Science has advanced to the point where DNA from ANIMALS and HUMANS can be intermixed in SCIENTIFIC LABORATORY EXPERIMENTATION. This is simply outrageous!

"ANIMAL-HUMAN HYBRID research is being conducted in England, which many in the International Medical Community now consider to be a ROGUE MEDICAL STATE. It is unknown how many U.S. laboratories are currently conducting similar research."

SLEEPING PARTNERS
PART ONE

Richard Starkings
Words
Axel Medellin
Pictures

The SEED of OPPOSITE SPECIES

Ebony Dreams sequence by Dave Sim with colour by Axel Medellin

Among other activities, the Ohio bill would ban:

[a] A HUMAN EMBRYO into which a NONHUMAN CELL or a COMPONENT of a NONHUMAN CELL is introduced so that it is uncertain whether the HUMAN EMBRYO is a member of the species HOMO SAPIENS;

[b] A hybrid HUMAN-ANIMAL EMBRYO produced by fertilizing a HUMAN EGG with a NONHUMAN SPERM;

[c] A hybrid HUMAN-ANIMAL EMBRYO produced by fertilizing a NONHUMAN EGG with a HUMAN SPERM;

[d] An EMBRYO produced by introducing a NONHUMAN NUCLEUS into a HUMAN EGG;

[e] An EMBRYO produced by introducing a HUMAN NUCLEUS into a NONHUMAN EGG;

[f] An EMBRYO containing at least haploid sets of chromosomes from both a HUMAN and a NONHUMAN LIFEFORM;

[g] A NONHUMAN LIFEFORM; engineered with the intention of generating functional HUMAN GAMETES within the body of a NONHUMAN LIFEFORM;

[h] A NONHUMAN LIFEFORM engineered such that it contains a HUMAN BRAIN or a brain derived wholly from HUMAN NEURAL TISSUES.

*By Yvette. See ELEPHANTMEN #39

The Ohio bill is very similar to a couple of bills introduced some years earlier by U.S. Senator Sam Brownback.

2005

Mr. BROWNBACK introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary...

To amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit HUMAN CHIMERAS. This Act may be cited as:

THE HUMAN CHIMERA PROHIBITION ACT OF 2005

FINDINGS

Congress finds that··

(1) advances in research and technology have made possible the creation of chimeras, which are beings with diverse human and non-human tissue;

(2) serious ethical objections are raised to some types of chimeras because they blur the lines between human and animal, male and female, parent and child, and one individual and another individual;

(3) respect for human dignity and the integrity of the human species may be threatened by chimeras;

(4) the uniqueness of individual human beings is manifested in a particular way through their brain and their reproductive organs/cells; and

(5) with an increase in emerging zoonotic infection threatening the public health, both domestically and abroad, chimeras present a particularly optimal means of genetic transfers that could increase the efficiency or virulence of diseases threatening both humans and animals.

STILL DELUSIONAL...

MAN, HIS SKIN IS SO *COLD.*

PROHIBITION ON HUMAN CHIMERAS

subsection [a]

It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly, in ·· or otherwise affecting ·· interstate commerce;

[1] To create or attempt to create a human chimera;

[2] To transfer or attempt to transfer a human embryo into a non-human womb;

[3] To transfer or attempt to transfer a non-human embryo into a human womb; or

[4] To transport, or receive for any purpose, a human chimera.

Penalties·

[1] IN GENERAL· Whoever violates subsection [a] shall be fined under this title, imprisoned not more than 10 years, or both.

[2] CIVIL PENALTY· Whoever violates subsection [a] and derives pecuniary gain from such violation shall be subject to a civil fine of the greater of $1,000,000 and an amount equal to the amount of the gross gain multiplied by 2.

Normally, prolifers such as Brownback draw their line at protecting human embryos. However, any embryos produced by combining human and animal gametes are not human. So Brownback must believe that human eggs and sperm have a special moral status before they combine to produce embryos.

Presumably, one goal of Brownback's ban on mixing human and animal gametes is to prevent the birth of a creature that is in some sense a diminished human being. Since combining human and non-hominoid animal gametes will most likely not result in viable hybrids, banning that practice seems superfluous.

Excerpts from **REASON.COM**

IT'S A VERY STRANGE DREAM THAT STICKS WITH ME FAR INTO THE WAKING DAY.

THERE'S A SWORD IN MY HAND...

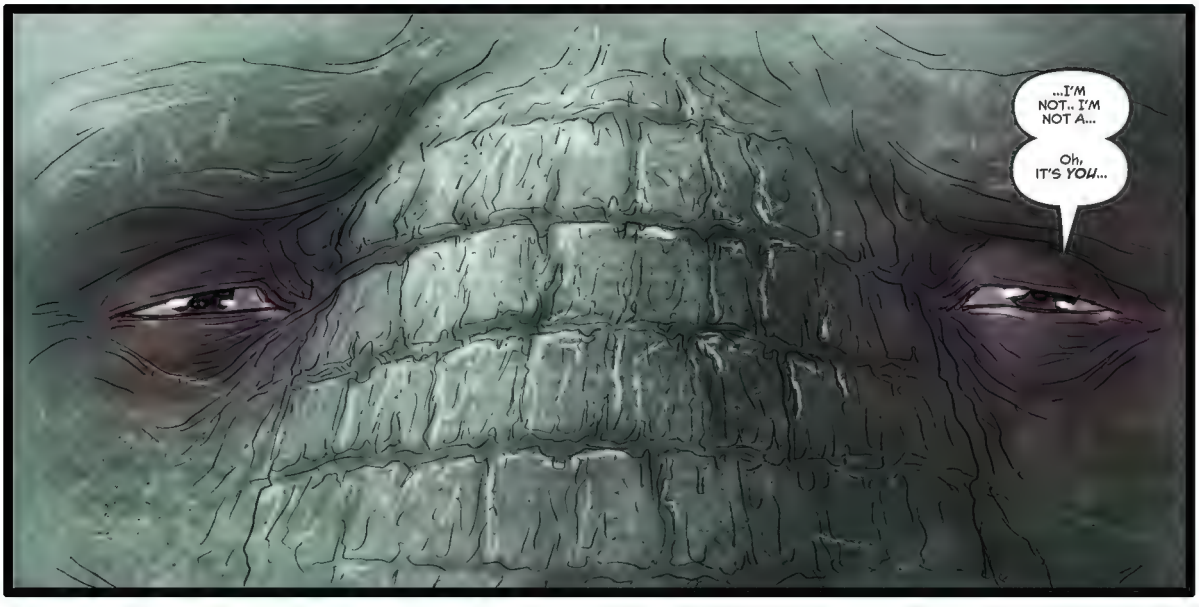
...AND I'M SOMEWHERE VERY FAR NORTH WAITING FOR A VERDICT WHICH WILL ABSOLVE ME...

ABSOLVE ME OF WHAT... I DON'T KNOW...
BUT THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ABOUT: ABSOLUTION
MY SKIN IS STARTING TO FUSE TO THE COLD METAL OF THE SWORD.
THE VERDICT IS INEVITABLE, BUT I'VE BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME... AND STILL NOTHING IS DONE.
I'M COVERED IN SNOW. I'M COLD, BUT I KNOW, SOMEHOW, THAT IF I MOVE, A TECHNICALITY WILL BE FOUND AND THE VERDICT WILL GO AGAINST ME.
LOTS OF TECHNICALITIES ARE FOUND. IT'S BEEN YEARS AND IT'S JUST BEEN ONE TECHNICALITY AFTER ANOTHER. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THEY ARE, BUT I CAN FEEL IT IN MY BONES WHEN EACH ONE IS FOUND. THEN MORE WAITING. MORE SNOW, MORE COLD. MORE DELAYING THE INEVITABLE.

BUT AS LONG AS I DON'T MOVE, I STILL HAVE A CHANCE. IF I MOVE, THE VERDICT WILL FALL AGAINST ME.
SOMETIMES I CAN SEE OBJECTS IN THE DISTANCE. MOST TIMES I CAN'T. EVEN A SLIGHT FLURRY REDUCES VISIBILITY TO NEAR ZERO.
SOMETIMES THE SNOW ALMOST COVERS ME. THEN A STIFF WIND BLOWS OR THERE'S A SLIGHT THAW AND SOME OR MOST OF ME EMERGES INTO THE THIN DAYLIGHT.
"A SWORD IS USELESS IN THE HANDS OF A COWARD."
WHAT'S *THAT* FROM? I KEEP THINKING OF IT. IT'S MY FIRST THOUGHT WHEN I DREAM THAT I'VE WOKEN UP.
"A SWORD IS USELESS IN THE HANDS OF A COWARD."

I CONSCIOUSLY THINK TO MYSELF, "THIS HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH MAPPO," BUT THEN THERE'S ANOTHER VOICE IN MY HEAD...
"LIKE MAPPO... BUT MUCH HIGHER UP."
AS IF EMPHASIZING THE POINT, THE WIND KICKS UP AND THE SNOW GETS MORE INTENSE.
LIKE MAPPO... BUT HIGHER UP...
MUCH HIGHER UP...
WHO COULD BE HIGHER UP THAN THE PEOPLE WHO CREATED THE ELEPHANTMEN?

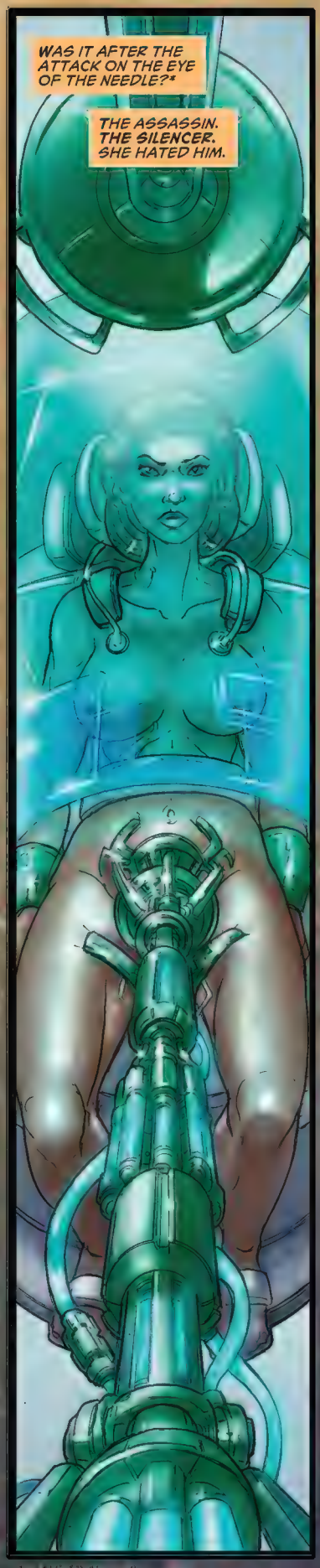
"A SWORD IS USELESS IN THE HANDS OF A COWARD."



DEATH.
EBONY.

WHEN DID PANYA STOP WEARING THE ROSE IN HER HAIR...?

WHEN DID SHE START TO BECOME SOMEONE ELSE?


WAS IT AFTER THE ATTACK ON THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE?*
THE ASSASSIN. THE SILENCER. SHE HATED HIM.

BUT SHE LET HIM HAVE HER NEVERTHELESS.
A HEAT-OF-THE-MOMENT THING.
WHAT WOULD SAHARA MAKE OF THAT?
WHAT WOULD SHE THINK IF SHE KNEW THAT SHE'D TAKEN THAT SCUM INSIDE HER LONG BEFORE THEY INSERTED OBADIAH HORN'S PRECIOUS DNA...?
WOULD CASBAH JOE TELL SAHARA?
NO, OF COURSE NOT.
JOE LOOKS OUT FOR HIS OWN INTERESTS.
AND WHAT ABOUT THE SILENCER? PANYA WONDERS IF HE WAS IMAGINING HE WAS ACTUALLY WITH SAHARA THE WHOLE TIME. BASTARD.
WHAT'S THIS?

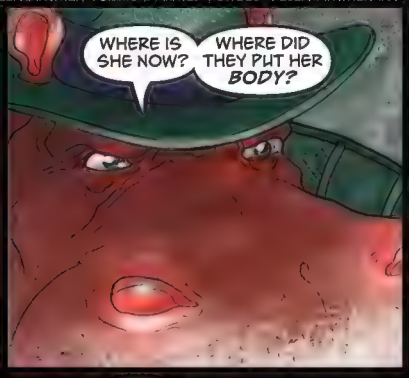
DEATH? HUNH. MY CALLING CARD.
YOU SHOULD TRY TO REMEMBER THAT.
EYE OF THE NEEDLE • THEN
LEAVE MY SHIT ALONE.
LISTEN, BITCH. ANYTHING YOU'VE SEEN HERE. ANYTHING YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT ME, YOU KEEP TO YOURSELF.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
I WOULDN'T WANT ANYONE KNOWING I LOOKED AT YOU, LET ALONE ALLOWED YOU TO TOUCH ME.
GOOD. LET'S KEEP IT THAT WAY.
YOU ASSHOLE!
DON'T BE THINKING I'M YOUR BOOTY CALL!
I'VE GOT PROBLEMS, ENOUGH, GIRL.
Oh YEAH, THE SILENCER HAS PLENTY OF PROBLEMS, AND NOT THE KIND YOU MIGHT EXPECT.
I WON'T NEED TO BE THINKING ABOUT A WOMAN AS WE--
AHNNH!

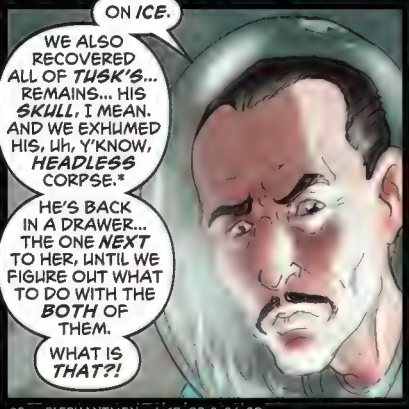
CANCER.
DAMN IT!
YEEARGGGH!
EVER SINCE THAT MUNT IMPALED HIM DURING THE U.N ATTACK ON MAPPO...*
EVEN WITH THE BEST SURGEONS HIS MOB CONNECTIONS COULD BUY.*
*See ELEPHANTMEN #5 & 16
IT STILL MESSED HIM UP. LUNG CAVITIES NEVER RECOVER WELL FROM TRAUMA.
SO HE PAYS THE MONEY FOR THE TREATMENT AND TAKES THE DRUGS.
BIP
PSSHT
CLKT
HSSSST
DAMN IT!
EXPENSIVE TREATMENT. EXPENSIVE DRUGS.
FITTING THEN, THAT HE KILLS ELEPHANTMEN TO PAY FOR IT ALL...

OF COURSE, HE'S GOTTA FIND SOMEPLACE ELSE TO TOSS THE BODIES...
THE L.A RIVER • NOW
WELL, FLASK, THEY DID A NICE JOB DRAINING THIS SECTION OF THE RIVER...
YEAH, AND REMIND ME AGAIN WHY WE'RE DOWN HERE?
2259

C'MON, GRUENWALD... WHAT DOES TRENCH THINK WE'RE GOING TO FIND HERE? THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF OUR RIVER KILLER?
MAYBE HE JUST WANTS YOU TO FIND A LITTLE HUMILITY?
MAYBE IF YOU'D KEPT HIM IN THE LOOP ON THE LAST INVESTIGATION,* I WOULDN'T HAVE TO BE DOWN HERE WITH YOU TO MAKE SURE YOU GET THE POINT?
*See ELEPHANTMEN #39

*See ELEPHANTMEN Volume 1: ARMED FORCES & ELEPHANTMEN #39





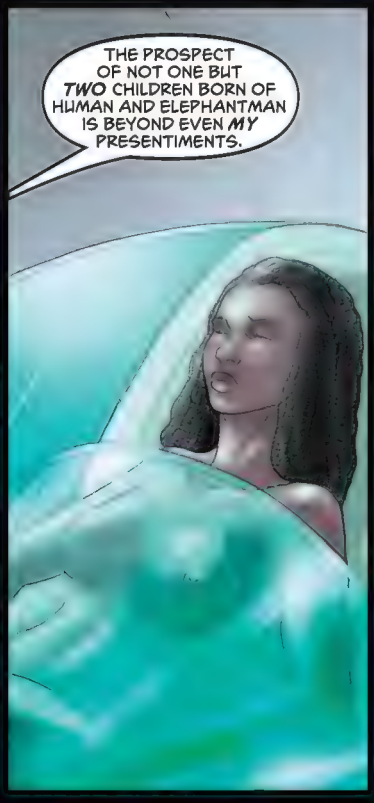
*See ELEPHANTMEN #4, 17, 22 & 36-39

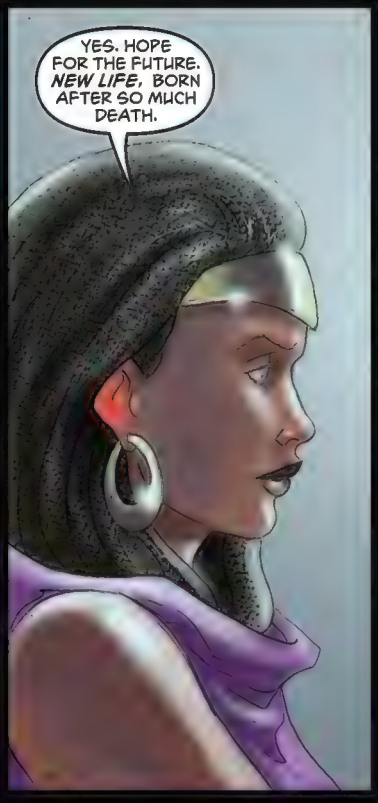
*See ELEPHANTMEN #2

THAT'S A BIG HOLE, JOE.
IS THERE ANY MORE TO YOUR STORY?

NATURALLY, LIEUTENANT, I DEEPLY REGRET THE DEATHS OF SO MANY VALUED CUSTOMERS.*
I'M GLAD MY ENGINEERS WERE ABLE TO ASSURE THAT THE KILLING SPREE CAME TO AN END.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #40
NATURALLY. INTERESTING THAT SO FEW SURVIVORS ARE WILLING TO TELL US VERY MUCH. I GUESS THEY'RE JUST RICH MEN WHO WANT TO GET BACK INTO YOUR HEAVEN HERE.
SO AFTER YOUR MUNTS PUSHED CAYLISS THROUGH THE WALL -- HE STAGGERED BACK... AND FELL?
AND GOT SUCKED INTO THE FLIGHT ENGINES?
YES.
SO, WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF TWO MANHUNTS AND THE EYE GETS A VISIT FROM ONE OF NEW YORK CITY'S MOST WANTED AND --
-- WHO EXACTLY WAS HE LOOKING FOR?
ONE OF THE DINERS. WE GAVE YOUR OFFICERS HIS DETAILS.
CAYLISS... INCINERATED HIM.
Hunh. CONVENIENT.
LIKE I SAID, THAT'S A PRETTY BIG HOLE.
IMAGINE HOW BIG A HOLE YOU WOULD BE LOOKING INTO IF THE EYE HAD FALLEN.

*Last seen in ELEPHANTMEN #18





*See ELEPHANTMEN #36-39

GABBATHA... VANITY...
I'M... STILL -- STILL ALIVE?
I WAS... SO COLD...
OUT COLD! YOU LOST A LOT OF BLOOD.
GABBATHA WAS HERE TO GIVE YOU A TRANSFUSION.
THE DOCTORS THOUGHT YOU WERE LUCKY. BECAUSE WE HAVE THE SAME BLOOD TYPE.
I HAD TO REMIND THEM THAT ALL OUR KIND HAVE THE SAME BLOOD TYPE. WE WERE DESIGNED THAT WAY.
YOU'RE ON HEAVY DUTY PAINKILLERS... YOU MAY HAVE SOME HALLUCINATIONS. BAD DREAMS.
YES... I'VE... SEEN THINGS...
I'VE... SEEN...
GHOSTS... LIKE...
LIKE MAPPO... BUT MUCH HIGHER UP...
WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT MAPPO?

IVORY TOWERS • NOW
MISTER PURCHASE?
2259

YES, MISTER HORN.
PLEASE TELL ME YOU HAVE DOWNLOADED ALL THE DATA YOU NEED FROM YOUR... PREDECESSOR.
YES, MISTER HORN.
I FEEL I MUST APOLOGIZE TO YOU FOR FALLING SHORT OF YOUR EXPECTATIONS...
I WAS CARELESS. THIS WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.
NO, IT WILL NOT.
IT CAN NOT.
YOUR FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS IS TO RUN SECONDARY BACKGROUND CHECKS ON EVERY EMPLOYEE WORKING HERE AT IVORY TOWERS.
AND I WANT THE TERRARIUM SHUT DOWN. HAVE THE WILDLIFE MOVED OUT INTO OUR MOJAVE RESERVATION.
IT MAKES SAHARA VULNERABLE.
AND THAT -- THAT MAKES ME VULNERABLE.

WELL, THAT IS AN INCREDIBLE SMELL WE DISCOV--
HEY -- WHAT THE HELL?!
SQUEEE!
MUD'S BLOOD! EVEN THE RATS AROUND HERE ARE UP TA SOMETHIN'.
SQUEEE!
WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU GOT DOWN THERE, PAL...?
WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW, A RAT'S NEST...
THE VERY THING WE ALWAYS SEEM TA BE LOOKIN' FOR...
SQUEEE!
SQUEEE!

SHIT IN MY SWAMP, WHAT IS THAT?
To Be Continued!

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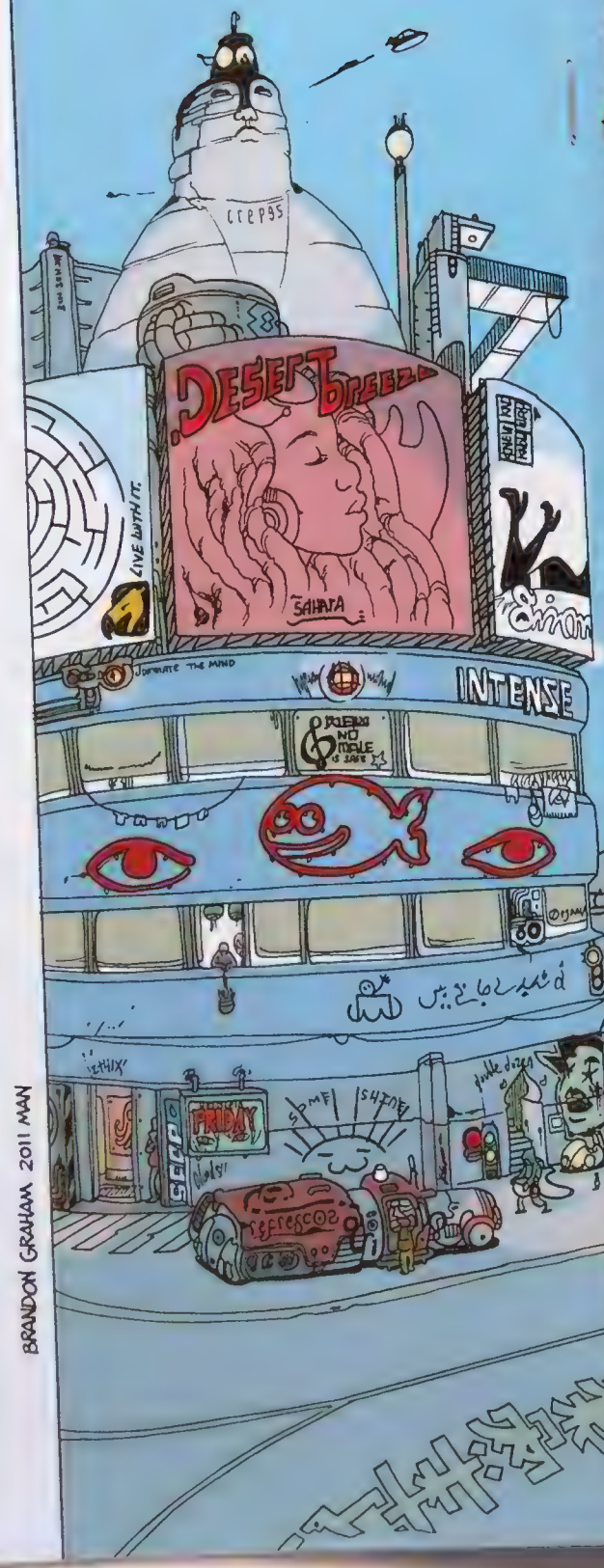
SLEEPING PARTNERS



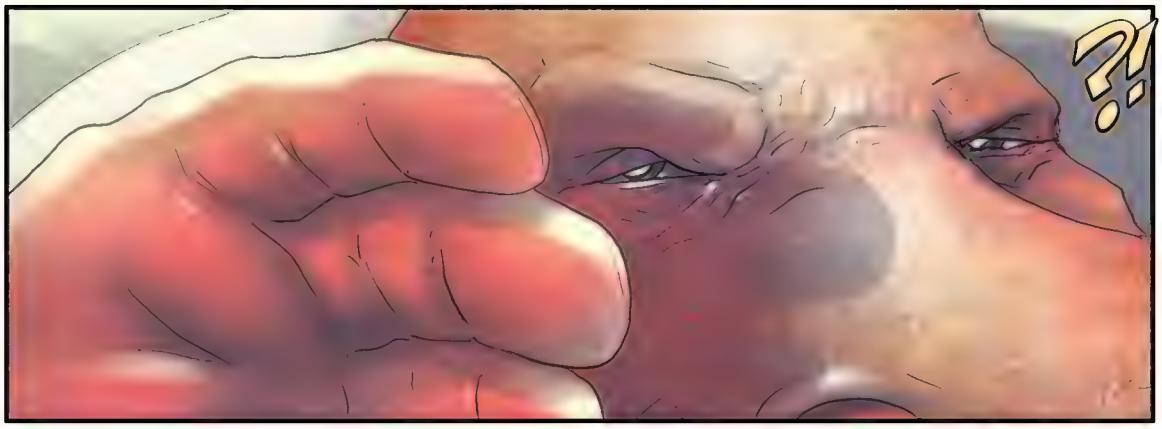
"AS OFTEN AS HERMAN HAD WITNESSED THE SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS AND FISH, HE ALWAYS HAD THE SAME THOUGHT: IN THEIR BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS CREATURES, ALL MEN WERE NAZIS.

"THE SMUGNESS WITH WHICH MAN COULD DO WITH OTHER SPECIES AS HE PLEASED EXEMPLIFIED THE MOST EXTREME RACIST THEORIES, THE PRINCIPLE THAT MIGHT IS RIGHT."

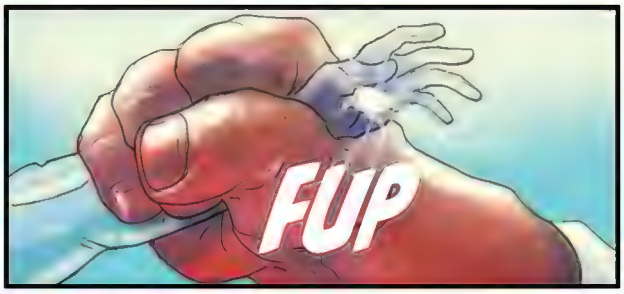
ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER
ENEMIES, A LOVE STORY

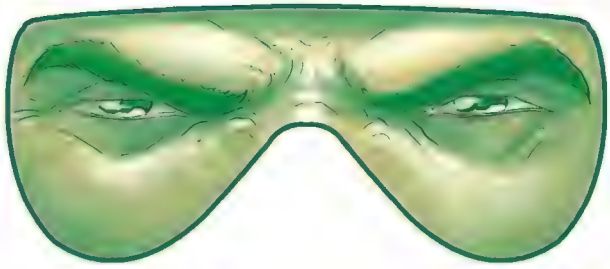
*In a rats' nest. See ELEPHANTMEN #42

HIP! WHAT THE HELL--?!
Uh... STAY BACK, GRUENWALD, SOMETHING JUST...
VSHMPP
INFORMATION AGENTS.
CAN'T KILL 'EM...
AHHHH!
VSHMPP
DOESN'T MEAN I'M NOT GONNA MESS 'EM UP.
METABOLYDE.
IT'S AN ANTI-CANCER DRUG MADE FROM THE STEM CELLS OF -- GET THIS...
ELEPHANTMEN.
OKAY, GOOD WORK, SCHRODT.


?!

ZUMMMM

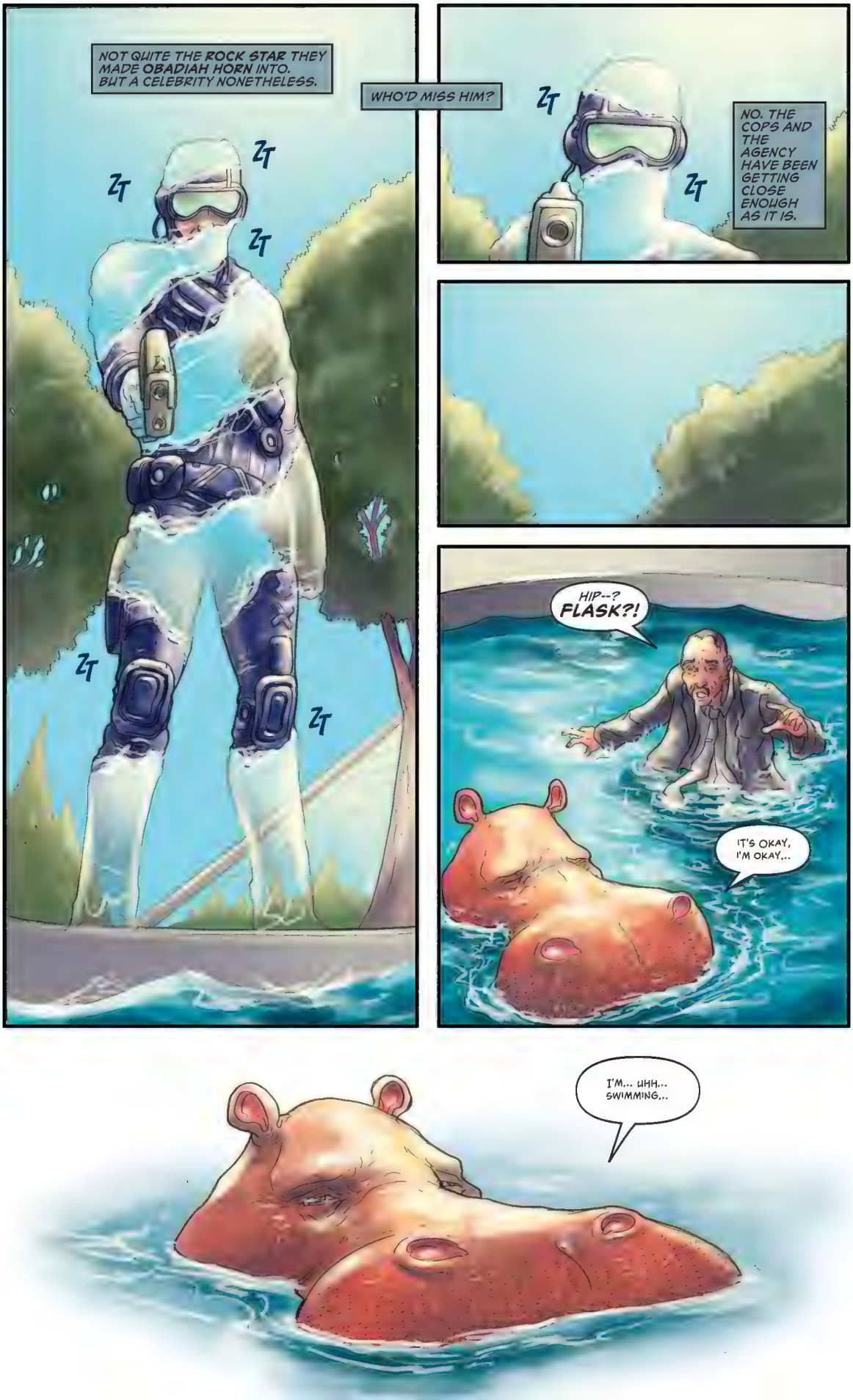

FUP



KRAK

SO WHO MAKES THIS STUFF?
PROMETHEAN PHARMACEUTICALS. I MEAN, WHO *ELSE* IS THERE, HUH?
THEY'RE BASED ABOUT A HALF HOUR AWAY, OUT BY THE *DESERT*.

IT WOULD BE SO EASY TO KILL THE MUNT, RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW...
ZT
SPTOOSH
SILENCE HIM.
BUT THIS IS HIP FLASK, INFORMATION AGENT, FORMER ASTRONAUT.
SO I GUESS WE'RE GOING OUT TO THE DESERT.
DAMN, I GET ALL SWEATY IN THE DESERT HEAT. I GO PINK IN LIKE A MINUTE.
PROMETHEAN, Huh? THE SAME GUYS THAT SENT US TO MARS?


NOT QUITE THE ROCK STAR THEY MADE OBADIAH HORN INTO. BUT A CELEBRITY NONETHELESS.
WHO'D MISS HIM?
NO. THE COPS AND THE AGENCY HAVE BEEN GETTING CLOSE ENOUGH AS IT IS.
HIP--? FLASK?!
IT'S OKAY, I'M OKAY...
I'M... UHH... SWIMMING...

The POISON DRUM

SLEEPING PARTNERS PART TWO

Richard Starkings Words
Axel Medellin Pictures

Hip Dreams by Dave Sim/Starkings
with colour by Axel Medellin

I'M SWIMMING...

SWIMMING IN MY POOL AND I SEE THAT SOMEONE HAS INSTALLED A *MIRROR* THAT STRETCHES ALL THE WAY UP TO THE *DEEP END*. I PADDLE SLOWLY TOWARD IT AND I'M THINKING...

"MAN, I'VE GOTTEN OLD ALL OF A SUDDEN."

AND I WONDER... IS THAT HOW *MIKI* SEES ME? AM I SOME KIND OF TRANSGENIC *SUGAR DADDY?*

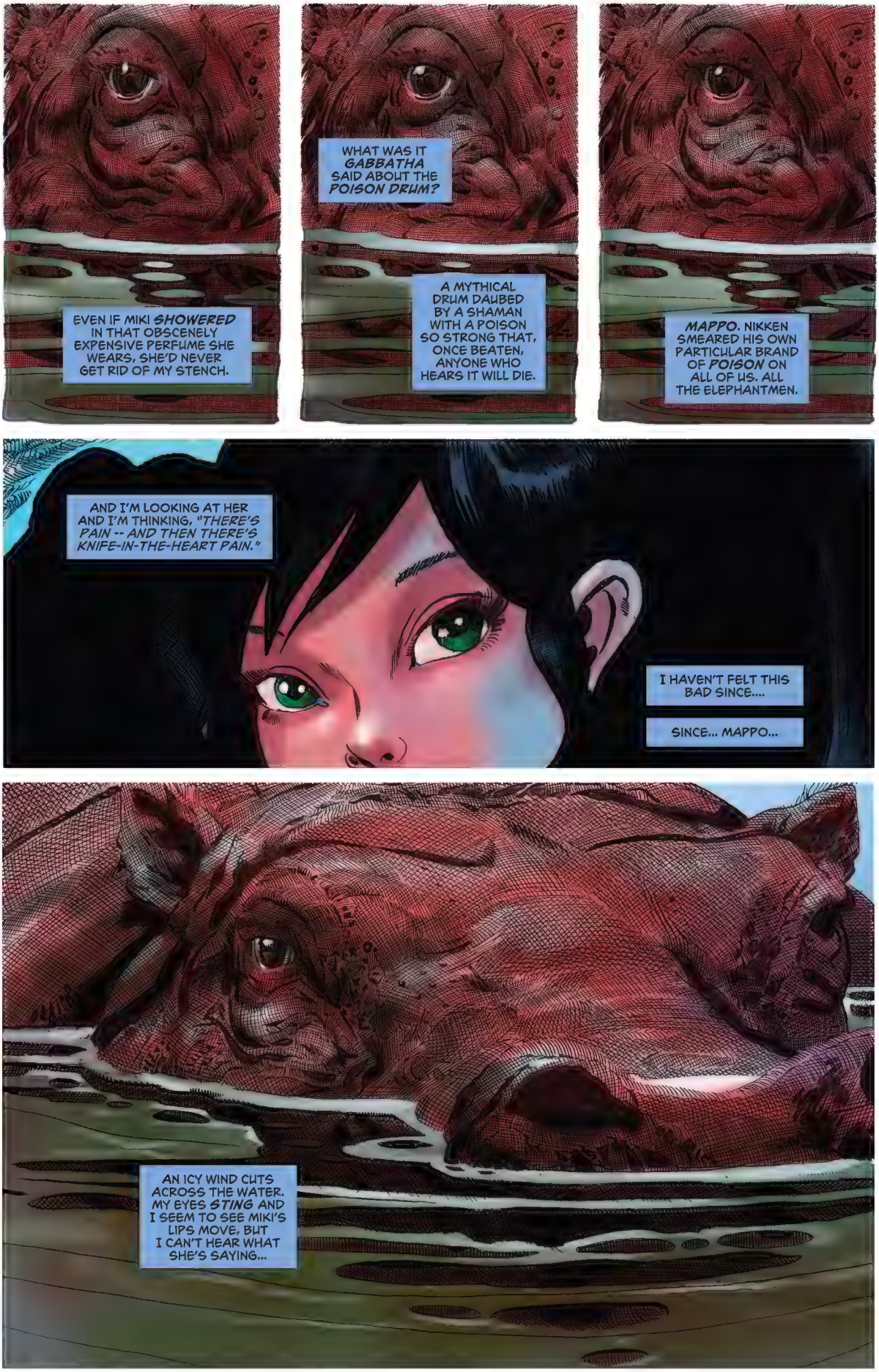
THEN I REALIZE, I'M NOT IN THE POOL AT ALL. I'M IN A RIVER, SWIMMING IN WATER FILLED WITH MY OWN FECES...

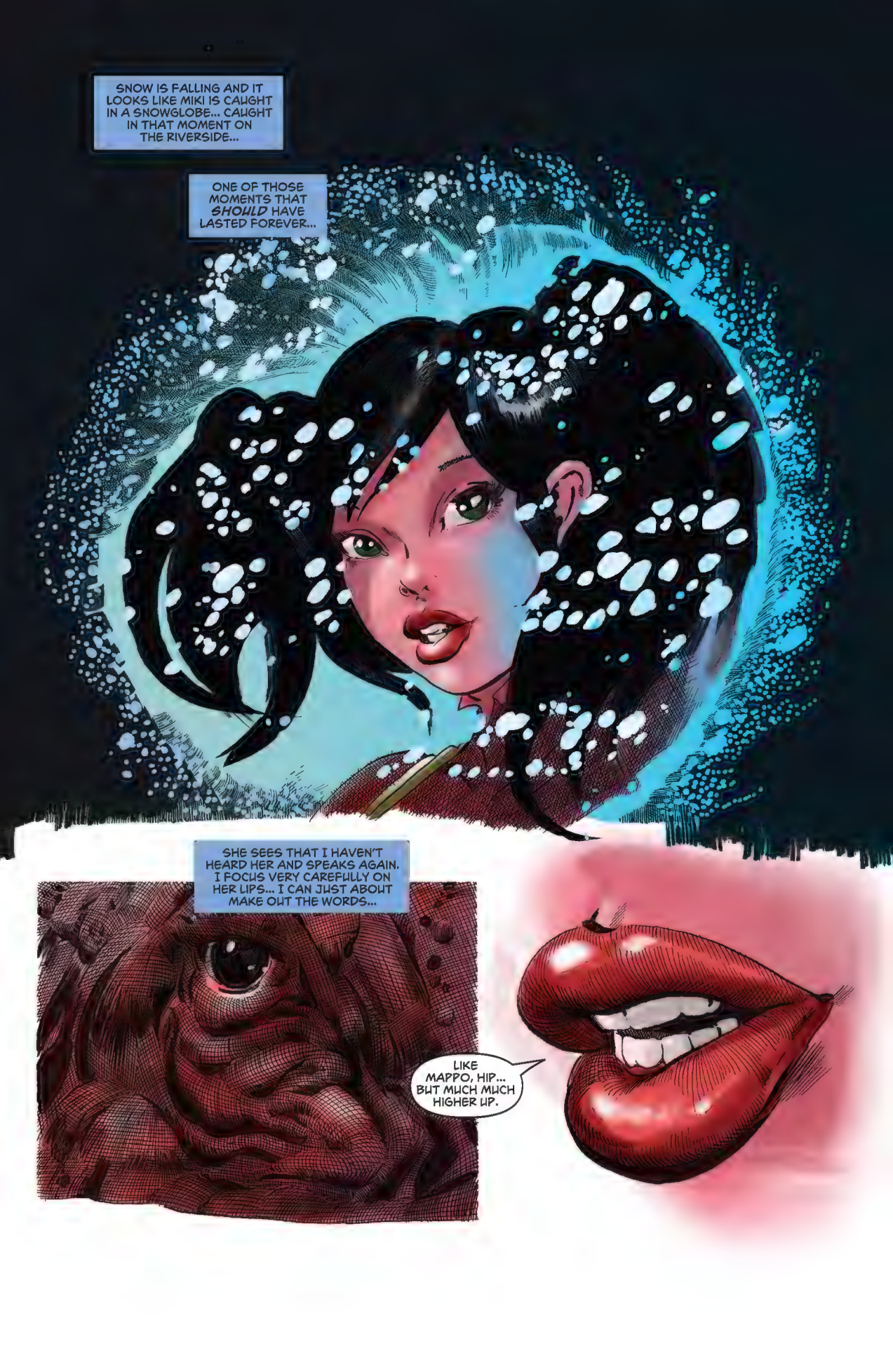
THERE'S A SHIMMERING OVER MY HEAD AND THERE SHE IS... IT'S THAT DAY NOT SO LONG AGO WHEN SHE FOUND ME AT THE RIVERSIDE... AND SHE LOOKS UP AT ME WITH THOSE *AMAZING* BIG EYES OF HERS AND SAYS...

EVERYTHING SHIMMERS AGAIN AND THEN IT'S THAT NIGHT SHE STAYED OVER AND I HEAR MYSELF SAYING, *"I AIN'T NEVER GONNA LET NOTHING BAD HAPPEN TO YOU AGAIN, NEVER!"*

AND SHE SEES THE TEARS WELLING UP IN MY EYES, AND IT'S LIKE THE MOMENT FREEZES, HER LOOKING SO TENDERLY AT ME AND ME EMBARRASSED.

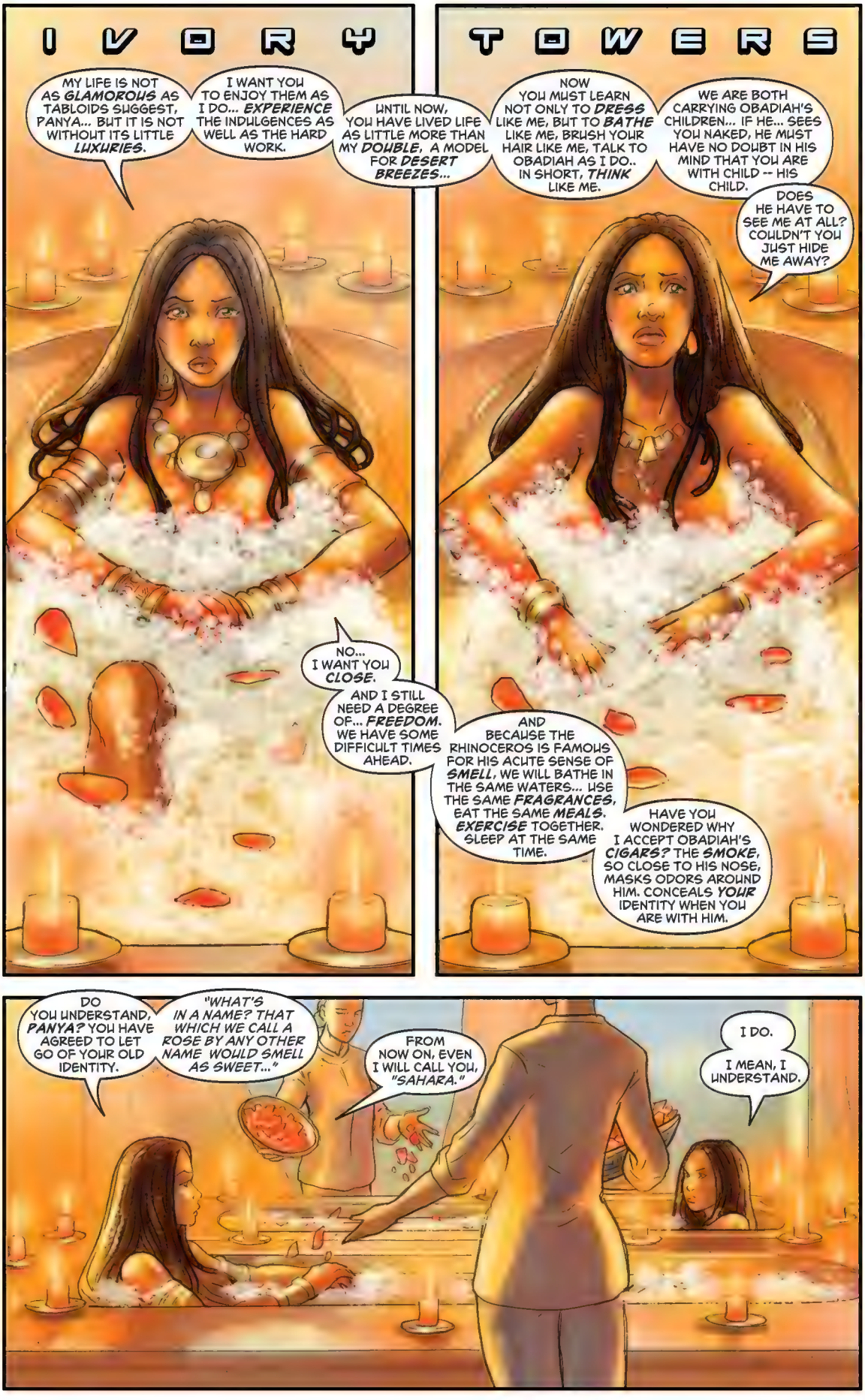
AND I CAN SMELL THAT PERFECT, BEAUTIFUL SMELL, THE ONE THAT MAKES YOUR HEART BEAT FASTER BECAUSE SHE'S STANDING SO CLOSE TO YOU...
AND SHE LOVES YOU...
SHE LOVES YOU SO MUCH YOU CAN SMELL IT!
BUT THERE'S THAT THOUGHT AGAIN, THE ONE I'VE BEEN PUSHING TO THE BACK OF MY MIND...
"I AM NOT YOUR SWEETHEART!
"STAY AWAY FROM ME!"
AND I FEEL THE TEARS WELLING UP AGAIN. ONLY NOW DO I REALIZE WHERE THE TEARS ARE COMING FROM...
ONLY AS I SIT HERE STEWING IN MY OWN JUICES DO I SEE THAT I'M JUST ANOTHER BAD THING THAT HAPPENED TO HER...
JUST ANOTHER... STINK... GROUND SO DEEP INTO HER FLESH SHE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO WASH IT OFF...

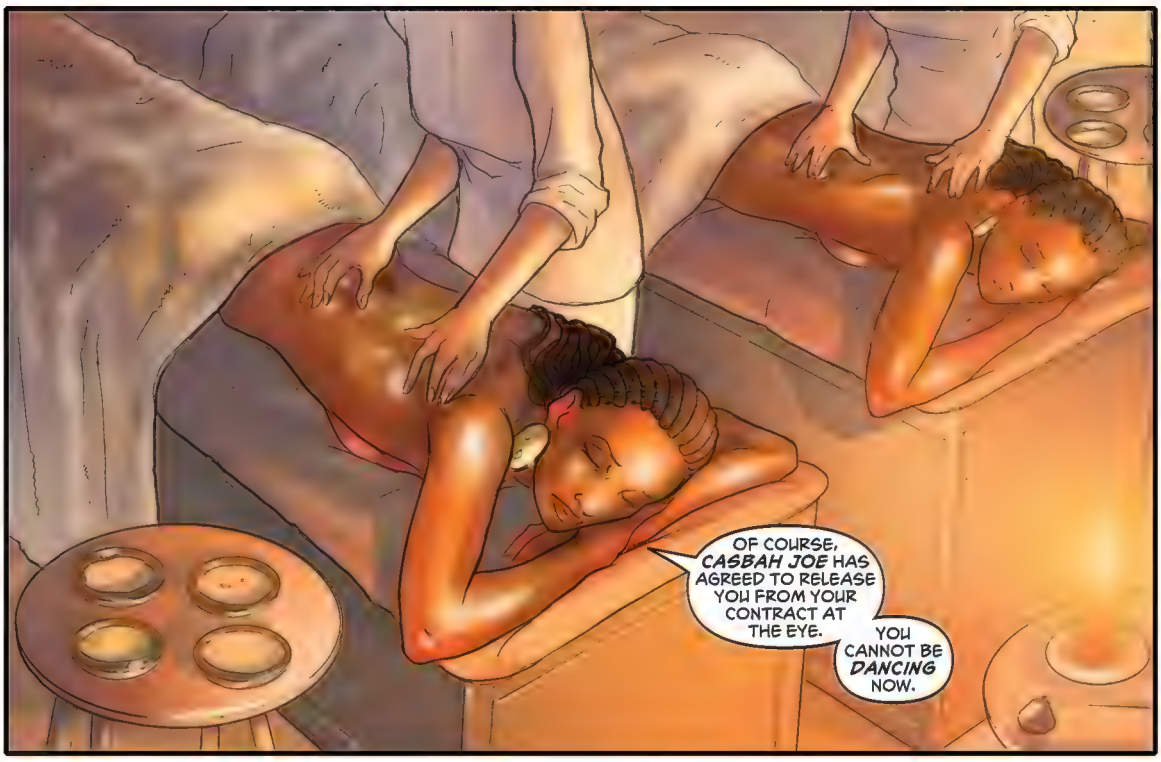

EVEN IF MIKI SHOWERED IN THAT OBSCENELY EXPENSIVE PERFUME SHE WEARS, SHE'D NEVER GET RID OF MY STENCH.
WHAT WAS IT GABBATHA SAID ABOUT THE POISON DRUM?
A MYTHICAL DRUM DAUBED BY A SHAMAN WITH A POISON SO STRONG THAT, ONCE BEATEN, ANYONE WHO HEARS IT WILL DIE.
MAPPO. NIKKEN SMEARED HIS OWN PARTICULAR BRAND OF POISON ON ALL OF US. ALL THE ELEPHANTMEN.
AND I'M LOOKING AT HER AND I'M THINKING, "THERE'S PAIN -- AND THEN THERE'S KNIFE-IN-THE-HEART PAIN."
I HAVEN'T FELT THIS BAD SINCE....
SINCE... MAPPO...
AN ICY WIND CUTS ACROSS THE WATER. MY EYES STING AND I SEEM TO SEE MIKI'S LIPS MOVE, BUT I CAN'T HEAR WHAT SHE'S SAYING...

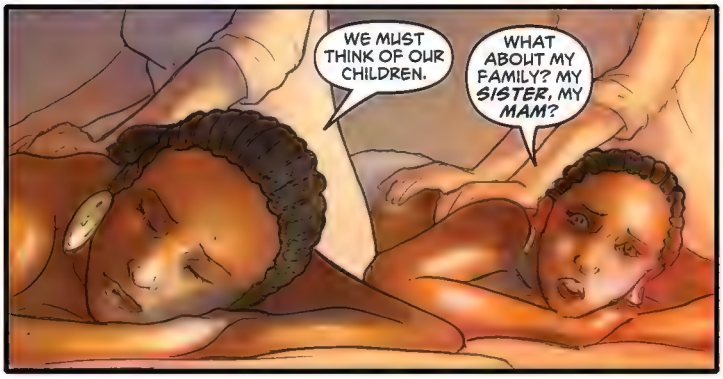

SNOW IS FALLING AND IT LOOKS LIKE MIKI IS CAUGHT IN A SNOWGLOBE... CAUGHT IN THAT MOMENT ON THE RIVERSIDE...
ONE OF THOSE MOMENTS THAT *SHOULD* HAVE LASTED FOREVER...
SHE SEES THAT I HAVEN'T HEARD HER AND SPEAKS AGAIN. I FOCUS VERY CAREFULLY ON HER LIPS... I CAN JUST ABOUT MAKE OUT THE WORDS...
LIKE MAPPO, HIP... BUT MUCH MUCH HIGHER UP.

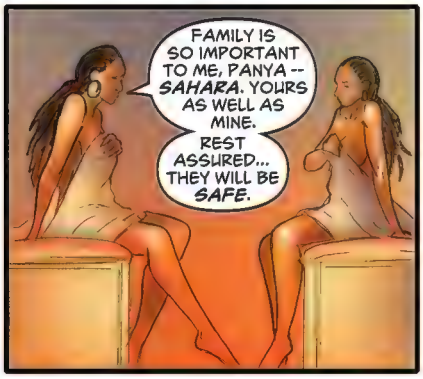
VENICE BEACH
WELL, AS ALWAYS, LIFE IS FULL OF SURPRISES...
... AND THE QUESTION ON EVERYONE'S LIPS IS, "SHOULD SAHARA BE ALLOWED TO CARRY HER BABY TO FULL TERM?"
WILL SHE GIVE BIRTH TO A BETTER HUMAN BEING OR A MONSTER?
SAHARA'S 'PRINCESS OF MARS' LOVE AFFAIR WITH OBADIAH HORN HAS BEEN SURPRISINGLY POPULAR OVER THE YEARS,
Hmmph
THE INFORMATION AGENCY
PROPELLING HER CLOTHING LINE, DESERT BREEZES TO EVER GREATER SUCCESS...
BUT ARE WE, AS A NATION, READY TO REVISE THE ELEPHANTMEN ACT?
I GUESS INTERSPECIES ROMANCE BEING FLAVOUR OF THE MONTH IS GOOD FOR YOU AND HIP, Eh, VANITY?
WHAT? I'M MIKI!!

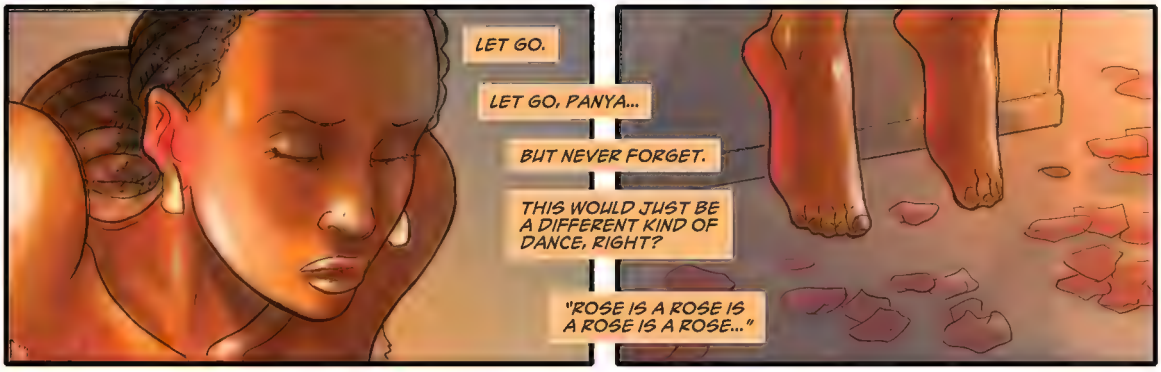
THE ACT CURRENTLY PROHIBITS ALL TRANSGENICS FROM PROCREATING.
OOPS, SORRY, DARLIN', HIP'S GIRLS LOOK A LOT ALIKE TO ME...
NICE, MATEWS. WELL, I CAN'T WAIT ALL--
BUT PERHAPS, GIVEN SAHARA'S CELEBRITY AND HER ROLE AS AN AMBASSADOR FOR THE U.N...
SOME KIND OF SPECIAL CASE COULD BE MADE..
SAHARA IS MUCH LOVED BY ELEPHANTMEN, HAVING WORKED WITH THEM DURING THEIR LONG PROCESS OF REHABILITATION...
FNAP
LEAVING? I'M SURE HE'LL BE BACK FROM THE DESERT SOON...
WITH VANITY IN TOW, I'LL BET...
YOU WANT TO LEAVE A MESSAGE?
TELL HIM, YOU SNOOZE, YOU LOSE...
Hmm
MIGHT BE TIME TO PUT THAT CANDLE OUT, HIP.


IVORY
MY LIFE IS NOT AS GLAMOROUS AS TABLOIDS SUGGEST, PANYA... BUT IT IS NOT WITHOUT ITS LITTLE LUXURIES.
I WANT YOU TO ENJOY THEM AS I DO... EXPERIENCE THE INDULGENCES AS WELL AS THE HARD WORK.
UNTIL NOW, YOU HAVE LIVED LIFE AS LITTLE MORE THAN MY DOUBLE, A MODEL FOR DESERT BREEZES...
NO... I WANT YOU CLOSE.
AND I STILL NEED A DEGREE OF... FREEDOM. WE HAVE SOME DIFFICULT TIMES AHEAD.
TOWERS
NOW YOU MUST LEARN NOT ONLY TO DRESS LIKE ME, BUT TO BATHE LIKE ME, BRUSH YOUR HAIR LIKE ME, TALK TO OBADIAH AS I DO.. IN SHORT, THINK LIKE ME.
WE ARE BOTH CARRYING OBADIAH'S CHILDREN... IF HE... SEES YOU NAKED, HE MUST HAVE NO DOUBT IN HIS MIND THAT YOU ARE WITH CHILD -- HIS CHILD.
DOES HE HAVE TO SEE ME AT ALL? COULDN'T YOU JUST HIDE ME AWAY?
AND BECAUSE THE RHINOCEROS IS FAMOUS FOR HIS ACUTE SENSE OF SMELL, WE WILL BATHE IN THE SAME WATERS... USE THE SAME FRAGRANCES, EAT THE SAME MEALS. EXERCISE TOGETHER. SLEEP AT THE SAME TIME.
HAVE YOU WONDERED WHY I ACCEPT OBADIAH'S CIGARS? THE SMOKE, SO CLOSE TO HIS NOSE, MASKS ODORS AROUND HIM. CONCEALS YOUR IDENTITY WHEN YOU ARE WITH HIM.
DO YOU UNDERSTAND, PANYA? YOU HAVE AGREED TO LET GO OF YOUR OLD IDENTITY.
"WHAT'S IN A NAME? THAT WHICH WE CALL A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD SMELL AS SWEET..."
FROM NOW ON, EVEN I WILL CALL YOU, "SAHARA."
I DO.
I MEAN, I UNDERSTAND.


OF COURSE, CASBAH JOE HAS AGREED TO RELEASE YOU FROM YOUR CONTRACT AT THE EYE.
YOU CANNOT BE DANCING NOW.


WE MUST THINK OF OUR CHILDREN.
WHAT ABOUT MY FAMILY? MY SISTER, MY MAM?

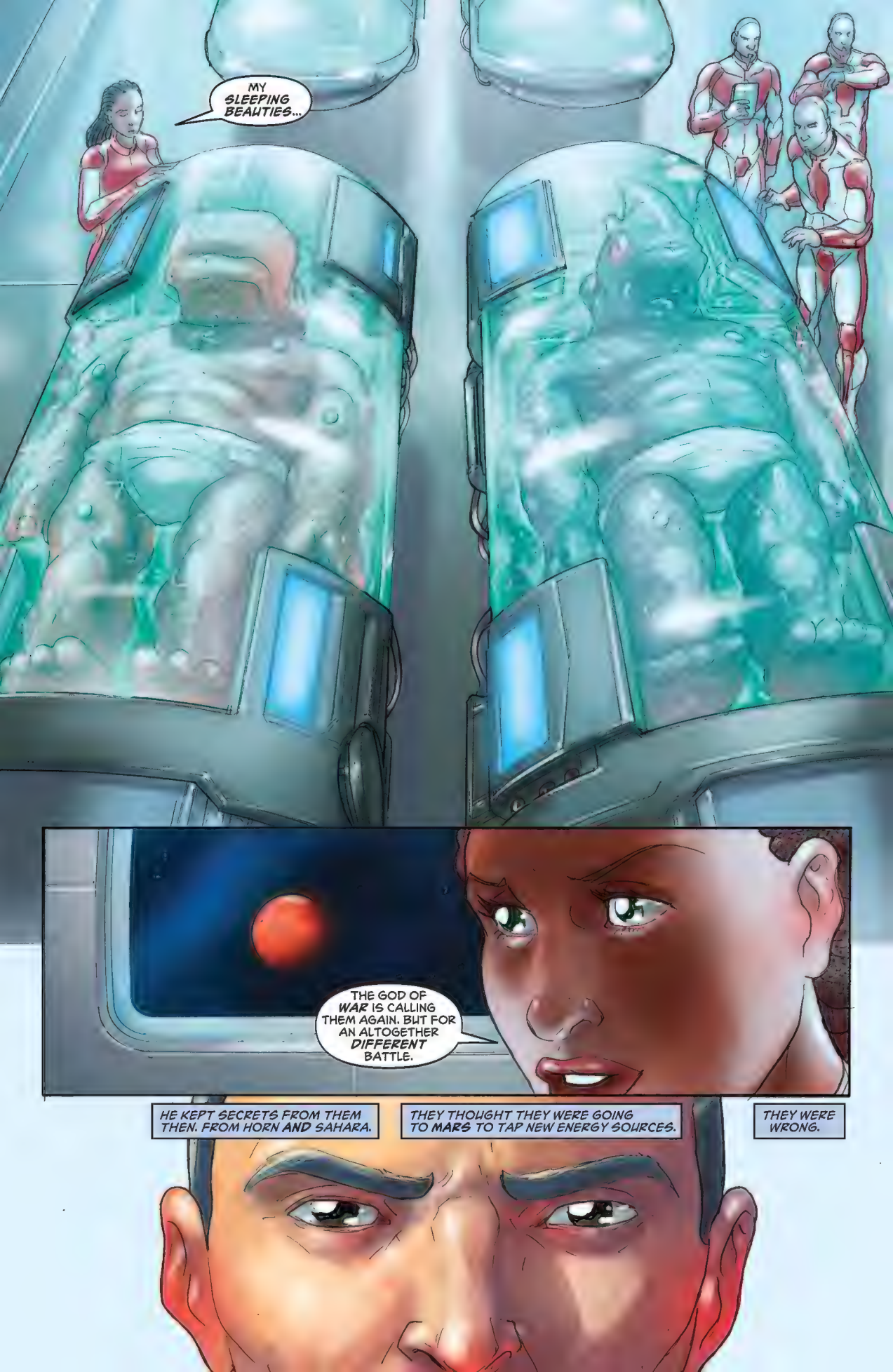

FAMILY IS SO IMPORTANT TO ME, PANYA -- SAHARA. YOURS AS WELL AS MINE.
REST ASSURED... THEY WILL BE SAFE.


LET GO.
LET GO, PANYA...
BUT NEVER FORGET.
THIS WOULD JUST BE A DIFFERENT KIND OF DANCE, RIGHT?
"ROSE IS A ROSE IS A ROSE..."

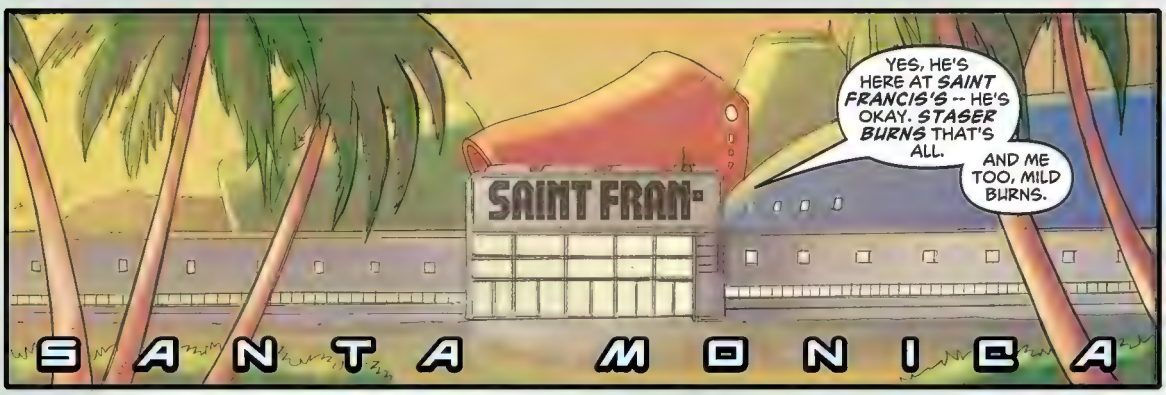
COME, LET US MOVE ON.

NO, YOUR DAUGHTER WILL NOT BE COMING BACK.
SURELY YOU REALIZED, WHEN SHE CHOSE HER... CAREER PATH, SHE MIGHT BECOME INVOLVED WITH PEOPLE LIKE MY EMPLOYERS.
PEOPLE WITHOUT CONSCIENCE, WITHOUT FEAR OF CONSEQUENCES.
PEOPLE, YOU MIGHT SAY, ABOVE THE LAW.
WE ARE MOVING YOU AND PANYA'S SISTER OUT OF STATE. NEW IDENTITIES.
IT'S FOR THE BEST.
IF YOU WISH TO STAY IN GOOD HEALTH, AND YOU WANT THE SAME FOR PANYA...
YOU WILL ACCEPT ALL THIS.
YOU WILL KEEP QUIET.
YES... IT'S--
IT'S FOR THE BEST.
ANOTHER SECRET TO PROCESS.
SO MANY. FOR SO LONG.
SECRETS FROM OBADIAH HORN.
SECRETS FROM SAHARA.

OF COURSE, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THIS WAY.
HE WAS PROVIDED BY PROMETHEAN OVER TEN YEARS AGO TO FUNCTION AS SOMEONE SAHARA COULD TRUST.
A HUMAN FACE.
ONE SHE WOULDN'T MIND WAKING UP TO.
CALM. EFFICIENT. HARD WORKING.
AND THEN SOME.
SIX POINT ONE FIVE ONE.
CHECK. FIVE NINER SEVEN.
SAMUEL.
YES, MA'AM?
LET'S WAKE THEM UP NOW...


MY SLEEPING BEAUTIES...
THE GOD OF WAR IS CALLING THEM AGAIN. BUT FOR AN ALTOGETHER DIFFERENT BATTLE.
HE KEPT SECRETS FROM THEM THEN. FROM HORN AND SAHARA.
THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING TO MARS TO TAP NEW ENERGY SOURCES.
THEY WERE WRONG.

TIKTOK? YEAH, THIS IS MIKI -- DO YOU HAVE ANY FARES YOU CAN PUT MY WAY? I'M IN VENICE BY THE BEACH.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE TAKING THE DAY OFF TO SEE THAT BIG LUG OF YOURS.
BUT AS A MATTER OF FACT I DO HAVE A FARE FOR YOU...
GOT A GUY BY THE NAME OF APOSTROPHE NEEDS A RIDE TO IVORY TOWERS.
I SEEM TO REMEMBER YOU RECENTLY CRASHED YOUR CAB INTO THAT PLACE, SO I DON'T HAVE TO GIVE YOU DIRECTIONS, RIGHT?
CUTE, TIKTOK, MY STEPDAD PAID FOR THE REPAIRS DIDN'T HE?
ANYWAY, I'M ON MY WAY...
SKYCAB
MAYBE THIS TIME I'LL CRASH STRAIGHT INTO SAHARA'S LIVING ROOM AND SHE'LL RUE THE DAY SHE EVER HAD HER EYES ON MY MAN...


SAINT FRAN-
YES, HE'S HERE AT SAINT FRANCIS'S -- HE'S OKAY. STASER BURNS THAT'S ALL.
AND ME TOO, MILD BURNS.
SANTA MONICA

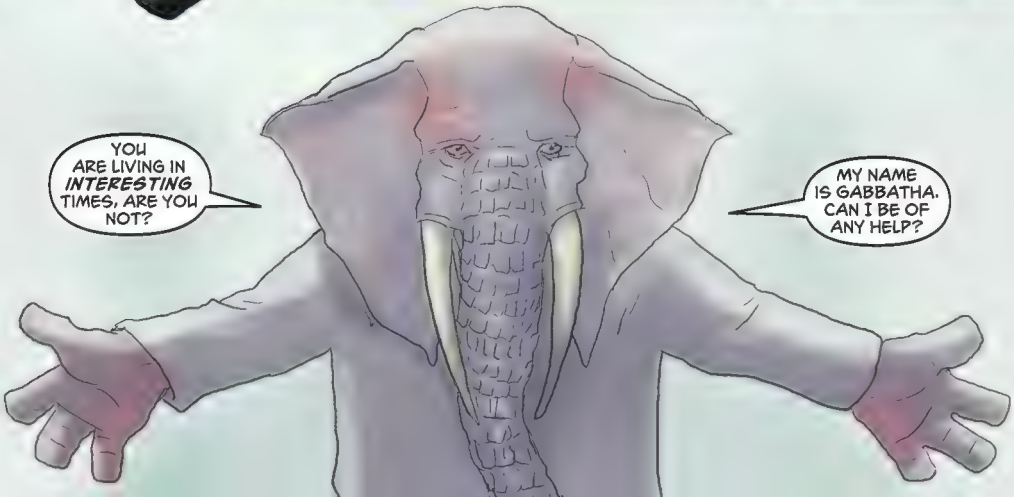
YEAH, I KNOW YOU COULD CARE LESS, LIEUTENANT... BUT WE WERE FOLLOWING A LEGITIMATE LEAD--
AND I'M AT THE OTHER END OF THAT LEAD WITH A STIFF WHO ISN'T EVER GOING TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS OR MINE...

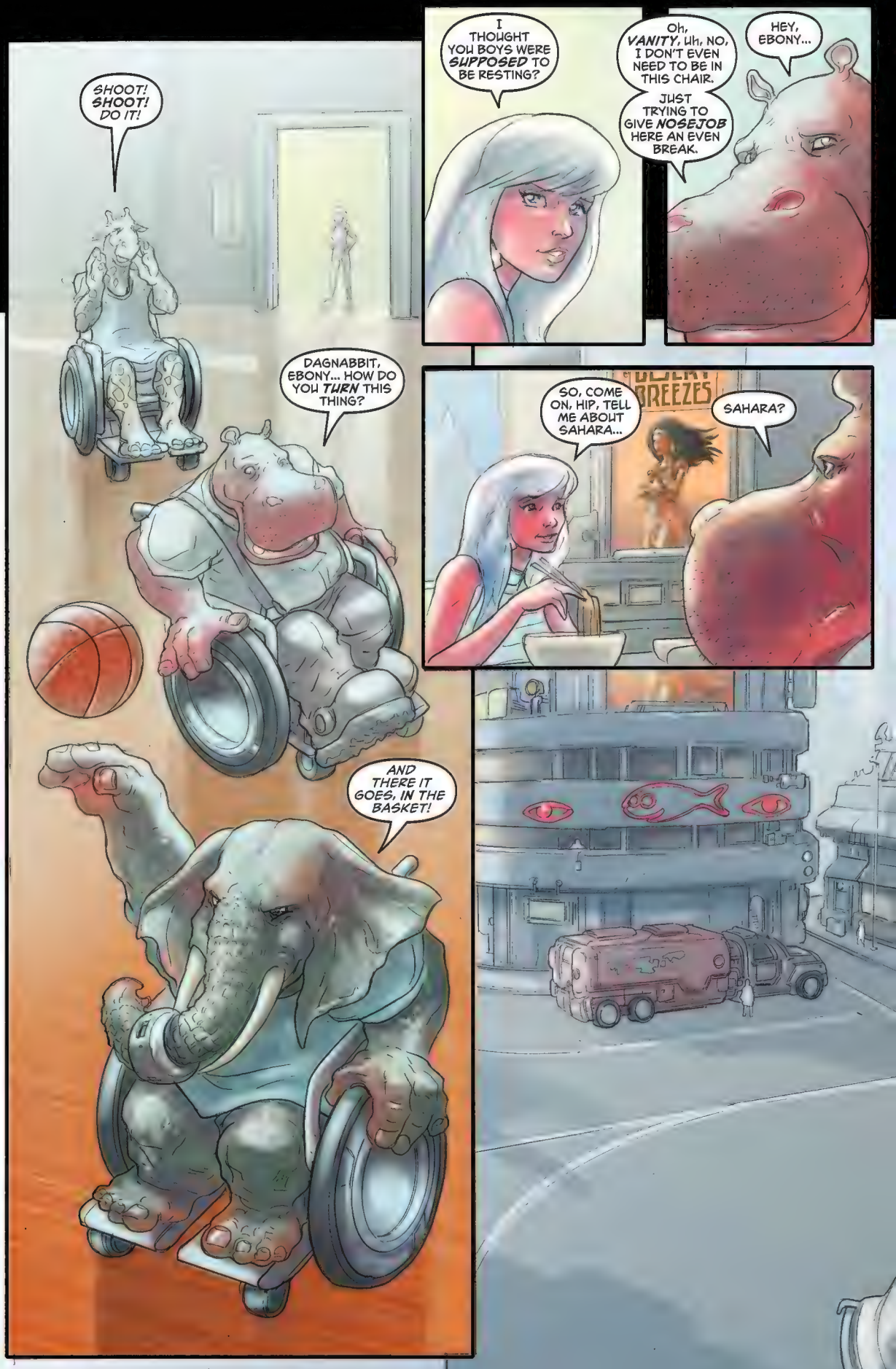
PROMETHEAN PHARAMACEUTICALS IS WONDERING WHY YOU WERE ON YOUR WAY HERE WITHOUT GIVING THEM A HEADS UP.
THEY HAVE FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES, GRUENWALD...
YOU'RE GETTING SLOPPIER EVERY DAY...

SO IF THIS LABRAT WAS GOING TO TELL YOU WHO HE WAS SELLING A CURE FOR CANCER TO, YOU'D BETTER BACK TRACK...

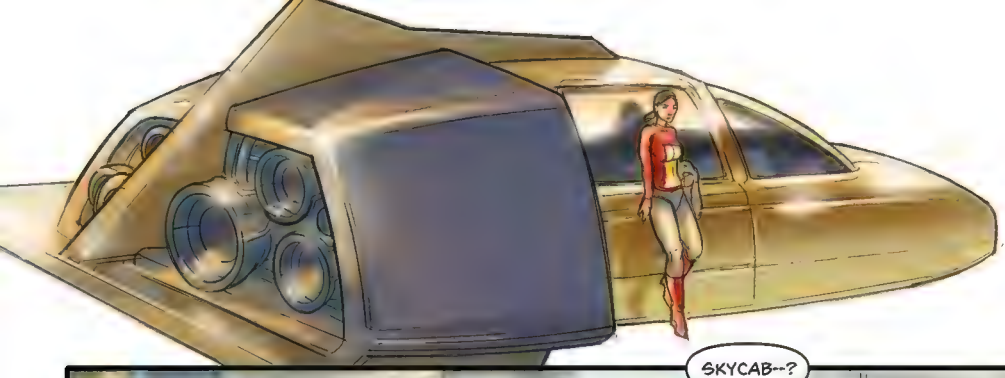
WHO GAVE YOU HIS NAME? WHO SENT YOU ON A WILD GOOSE CHASE OUT TO THE DESERT?

DIRECTOR GRUENWALD...


YOU ARE LIVING IN INTERESTING TIMES, ARE YOU NOT?
MY NAME IS GABBATHA. CAN I BE OF ANY HELP?


I THOUGHT YOU BOYS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE RESTING?
Oh, VANITY, uh, NO, I DON'T EVEN NEED TO BE IN THIS CHAIR.
JUST TRYING TO GIVE NOSEJOB HERE AN EVEN BREAK.
HEY, EBONY...
SHOOT! SHOOT! DO IT!
DAGNABBIT, EBONY... HOW DO YOU TURN THIS THING?
SO, COME ON, HIP, TELL ME ABOUT SAHARA...
SAHARA?
AND THERE IT GOES, IN THE BASKET!

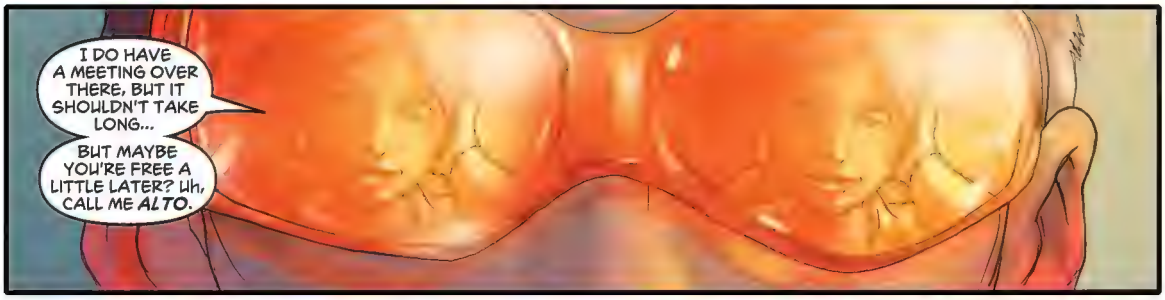
*See ELEPHANTMEN #39

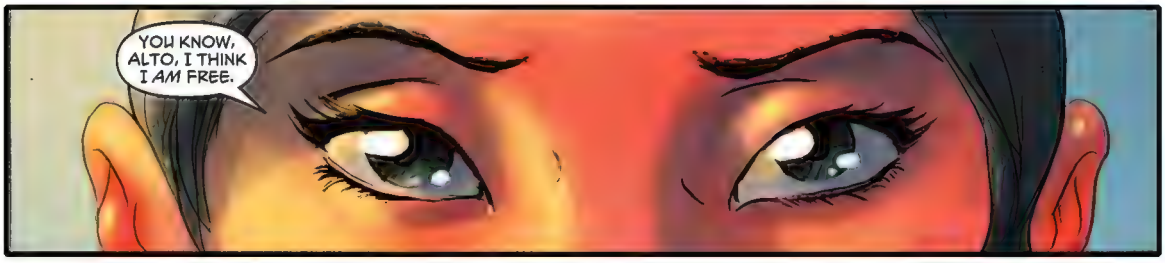


SKYCAB--?

YEAH, YOU CALLED FOR A RIDE?
WOW... I WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT... WELL, YOU'RE REALLY, UH...

SO, MISTER APOSTROPHE? WE HEADING FOR IVORY TOWERS...
...OR AM I TAKING YOU HOME?


I DO HAVE A MEETING OVER THERE, BUT IT SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG...
BUT MAYBE YOU'RE FREE A LITTLE LATER? UH, CALL ME ALTO.


YOU KNOW, ALTO, I THINK I AM FREE.

HAVE YOU GONE INSANE? HAS THE CANCER SPREAD TO YOUR BRAIN?!
ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT YOU ATTACKED GRUENWALD AND FLASK, PROMETHEAN TELL ME THAT DOCTOR WICKERMAN HAS A HOLE IN HIS HEAD!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO GET YOUR DRUGS FROM NOW?!
SOMEBODY LESS LIKELY TO BLOW THE WHISTLE ON ME. SOMEONE LIKE YOU, SCHRODT.
I TOOK A YEAR'S SUPPLY FROM WICKERMAN. I'LL BE FINE UNTIL YOU FIND ANOTHER SOURCE.
YIP! YIP! YIP!
ME? WHY ME?!
LOOK, IT'S ONE THING TO TELL YOU WHEN THE AGENCY IS ON YOUR TRAIL, BUT IF YOU'RE GOING TO GET ME INVOLVED IN MURDER...
SCHRODT, REMEMBER WHEN I MET YOU AND YOUR TWO KIDS, YOUR LOVELY WIFE AND THAT YAPPY DOG YOU USED TO HAVE...?
YIP! YIP!
YOU'LL FIND SOMEONE AT PROMETHEAN TO FILL WICKERMAN'S SHOES. I BOUGHT YOU TWELVE MONTHS. YOU CAN BUY YOUR FAMILY A LOT LONGER.

IT'S NOT THAT EASY, MAN... THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN... USED TO...?
DID I HEAR -- IS-IS THAT MY DOG...?
LIKE I SAID, SCHRODT... YOU'LL FIND SOMEONE. JUST BE GLAD YOUR KIDS STILL HAVE EACH OTHER AS PLAYMATES...
YIP! YIP!
YOU KNOW WHY THEY CALL ME THE SILENCER?
ROWF!
I DON'T LIKE A LOT OF NOISE.
To Be Continued!

SLEEPING PARTNERS
PART THREE
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ELEPHANTMEN
STARKINGS • MEDELLIN • ROSHELL • COOK

"IT'S OFTEN JUST ENOUGH
TO BE WITH SOMEONE.
I DON'T NEED TO TOUCH
THEM. NOT EVEN TALK.
A FEELING PASSES
BETWEEN YOU BOTH.
YOU'RE NOT ALONE."

MARILYN MONROE

DOWNTOWN L.A.
YEAH, SHE'S DEAD ALL RIGHT.
LAST TIME I SAW A DOG IN THIS CONDITION, SOME LADY HAD LEFT THE BACK WINDOW OPEN ON HER AIRCAR...
JUDGE GAVE HER FIVE YEARS FOR ANIMAL ABUSE.
SO YOU THINK THIS WAS AN ACCIDENT, LIEUTENANT BUSTAMANTE?
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING, SCHRODT?
YOU KNEW THE STAKES.
YOU KNEW THAT CHARACTERS LIKE THE SILENCER DON'T PLAY GAMES.
MAYBE. USUALLY WE'D FIND ONE OF THOSE GPS IMPLANTS... THIS ONE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE ONE...
OR IT POPPED OUT AND BOUNCED AWAY SOMEWHERE.
DID YOU THINK THAT SETTING FLASK AND GRUENWALD ON HIS TRAIL WOULD SOLVE THE PROBLEM FOR YOU?*
*See ELEPHANTMEN #43
YOU'VE MADE A SERIES OF VERY BAD DECISIONS, DOC...
YOU GOT PAID. YEAH, YOU GOT PAID...
AND LOOK AT WHAT YOU GOT AS A BONUS. LUCKY IT WASN'T YOUR WIFE, OR ONE OF YOUR KIDS.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED FOR THE AGENCY, DOC?
DIDN'T YOU EVER NOTICE...?

IN YOUR LINE OF WORK, PEOPLE *DIE*.

"HOW SWIFTLY THE DAYS PASS! IT MAKES US REALIZE HOW FEW ARE THE YEARS WE HAVE LEFT.

"FRIENDS ENJOY THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS TOGETHER ON SPRING MORNINGS... AND THEN THEY ARE GONE, CARRIED AWAY LIKE THE BLOSSOMS BY THE WINDS OF IMPERMANENCE, LEAVING NOTHING BUT THEIR NAMES.

"ALTHOUGH THE BLOSSOMS HAVE SCATTERED, THE CHERRY TREES WILL BLOOM AGAIN WITH THE COMING OF SPRING, BUT WHEN WILL THOSE PEOPLE BE REBORN?

"THE COMPANIONS WITH WHOM WE ENJOYED COMPOSING POEMS PRAISING THE MOON ON AUTUMN EVENINGS HAVE VANISHED WITH THE MOON BEHIND THE SHIFTING CLOUDS. ONLY THEIR MUTE IMAGES REMAIN IN OUR HEARTS.

"ALAS! NEITHER YOUNG NOR OLD KNOW WHAT FATE AWAITS THEM -- SUCH IS THE WAY OF OUR SAHA WORLD.

"ALL THOSE WHO MEET ARE DESTINED TO PART AGAIN -- THIS IS THE RULE IN THE FLOATING WORLD WE LIVE IN.

"MORE VALUABLE THAN TREASURES IN A STOREHOUSE ARE THE TREASURES OF THE BODY, AND THE TREASURES OF THE HEART ARE THE MOST VALUABLE OF ALL.

"FROM THE TIME YOU READ THIS LETTER ON, STRIVE TO ACCUMULATE THE TREASURES OF THE HEART."

THESE ARE THE WORDS OF NICHIREN.

WESTWOOD · 2259

SLEEPING PARTNERS

PART THREE

The THREE KINDS of TREASURE

Richard Starkings Words

Axel Medellin Pictures

Trench Dreams by Dave Sim/Starkings with colour by Axel Medellin

THAT'S... SO SWEET.
BEAUTIFUL.
CHIN UP, VANITY... JANIS AND RICK WERE GOOD EGGS, BUT I'M GLAD WE'RE NOT BURYING YOU, TOO.
THEY KNEW THE RISKS, WENT DOWN IN THE LINE OF DUTY--
JANIS WASN'T JUST A SILLY GIRL WITH A GUN, LIKE ME, RIGHT?
HIP, I SPOKE TO GRUENWALD ABOUT TAKING DEKKER'S WEAPON.*
LIKE YOU SUGGESTED.
I TOLD HIM ALREADY; IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.
THIS WAS NICE AN' ALL, BUT WHERE ARE THEY GONNA BURY TUSK, NOW?
IN ANOTHER UNMARKED GRAVE? LIKE HE NEVER MATTERED? LIKE ANY OF US MATTER?
THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION... TUSK... AND YVETTE.
YVETTE? SERIOUSLY? THEY SHOULD TOSS THAT BITCH IN A LANDFILL AND LET EVERYONE FORGET HER...
*See ELEPHANTMEN #39

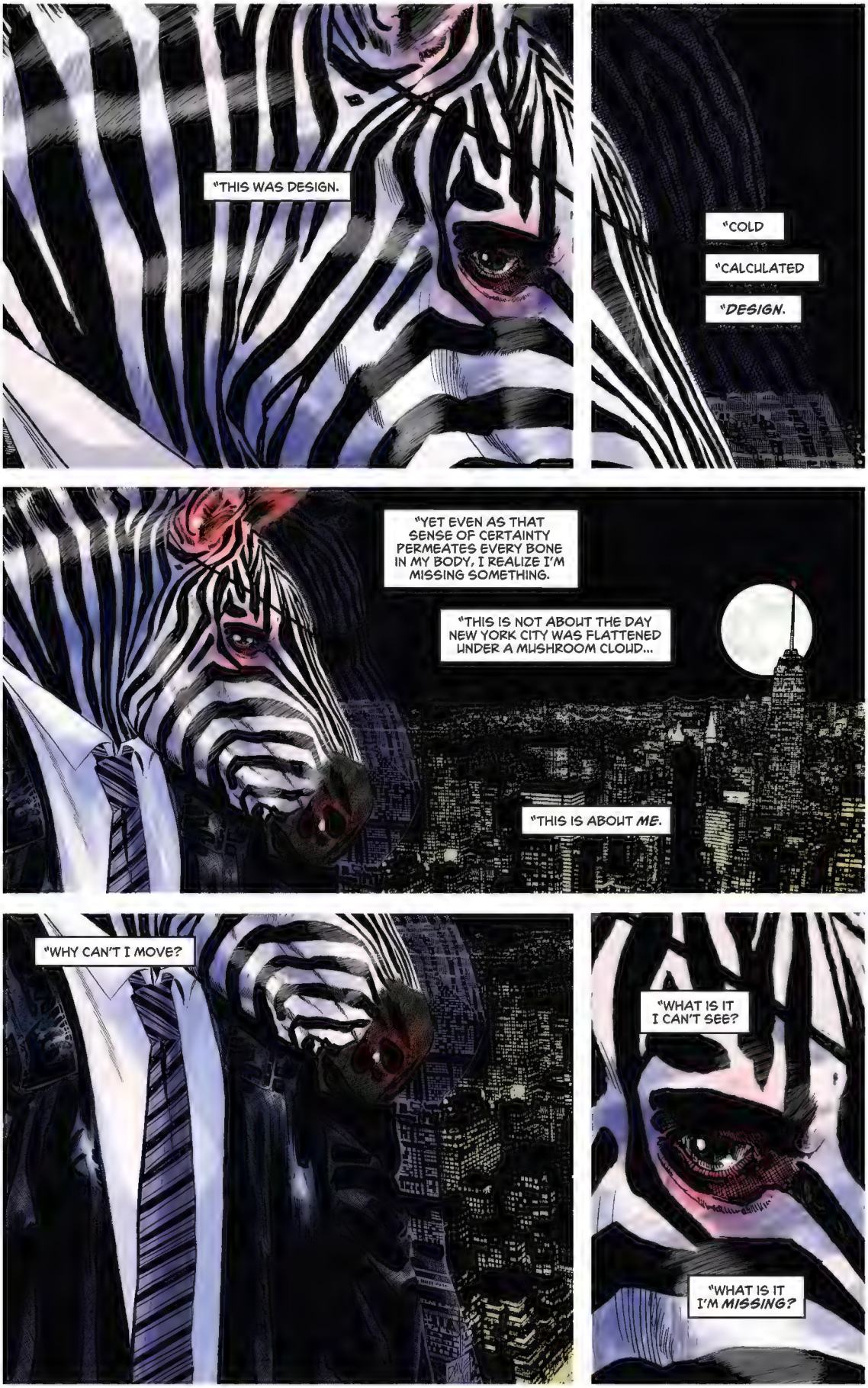
*See ELEPHANTMEN: WAR TOYS #1-3
ELEPHANTMEN: YVETTE &
ELEPHANTMEN #34-39

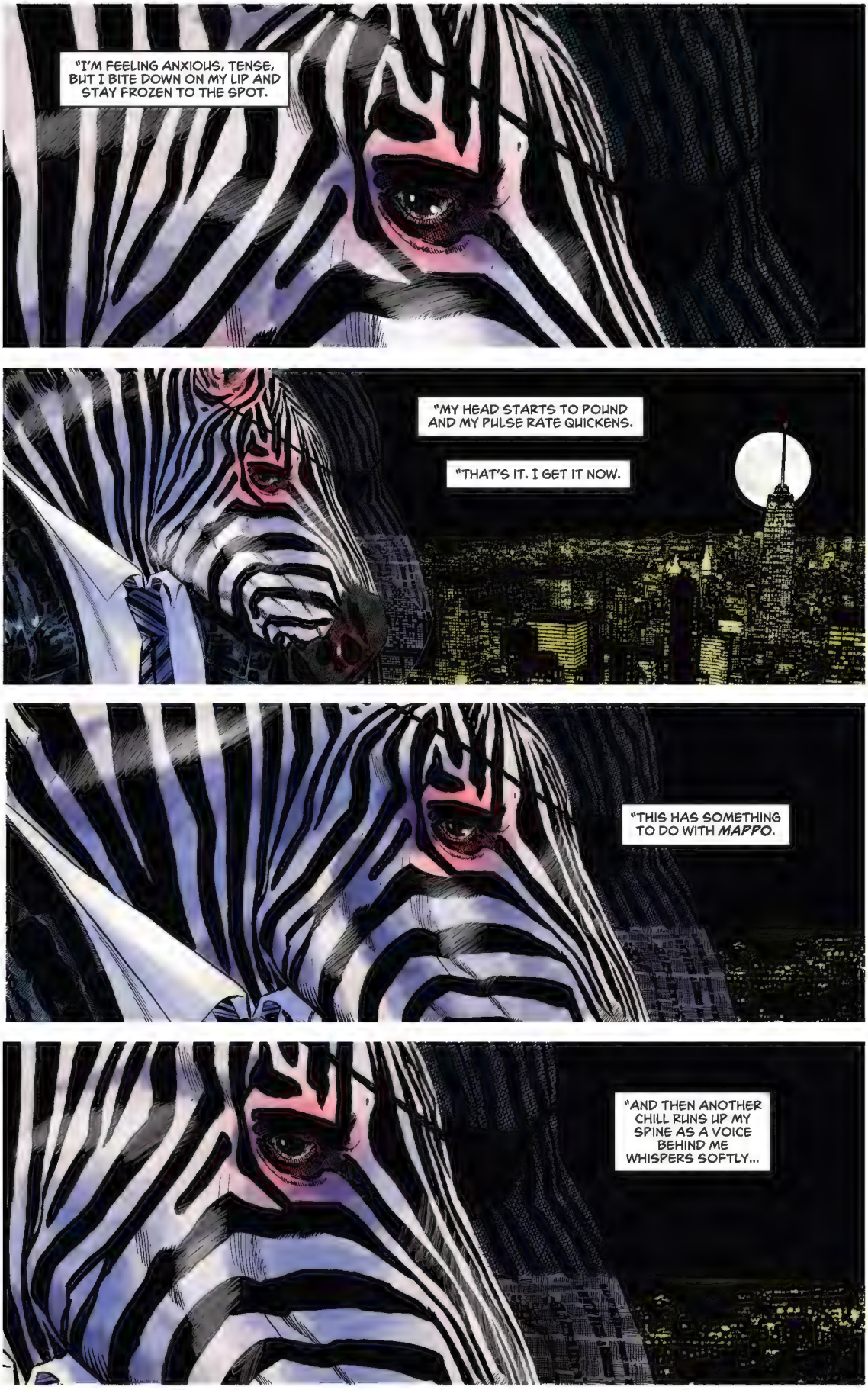
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN, LIEUTENANT? YOU -- ALL OF YOU -- WERE HER NIGHTMARES. HAD SHE NEVER SEEN YOU, SHE'D BE DRINKING COFFEE WITH A BOYFRIEND RIGHT NOW... NOT LYING IN A MORTUARY DRAWER WITH A SELF-INFLICTED GUNSHOT WOUND!
IF YOUR AGENTS--
SUFFERING KNOWS NO ALLEGIANCE, MY FRIENDS...
YVETTE PLAYED HER PART IN THE TAPESTRY OF OUR LIVES JUST AS WE DID IN HERS.
EACH OF US COME INTO THE WORLD WITH A MISSION, NOT NECESSARILY KNOWING WHAT THAT MISSION MIGHT BE...
OUR CHALLENGE IS TO LIVE EVERY DAY CONSCIOUSLY...
AND THEREBY HONOR ALL THOSE WHO LOST THEIR LIVES SO THAT WE MIGHT LIVE.
SERGEANT DEKKER, LIEUTENANT BLACKTHORNE, TUSK... AND YVETTE.
WE ALL SLEEP A LITTLE EASIER BECAUSE OF THEIR ACTIONS TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER.
SLEEP? I NEVER SLEEP EASILY...
ANY VET THAT SAYS HE SLEEPS WELL IS LYING.
THIS PAST WEEK I'VE DREAMT THE SAME DREAM EVERY NIGHT...

"I'M IN NEW YORK.
"AT LEAST, IT *LOOKS* LIKE NEW YORK.
"IT'S NOT THE *DUSTBOWL* NEW YORK IS *NOW*...
"IT *LOOKS* LIKE THE PICTURES I'VE SEEN.
"*OLD* PICTURES.
"I'M IN A TALL STRUCTURE, LEVEL WITH THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING.
"I CAN SEE HUNDREDS -- *THOUSANDS* -- OF PEOPLE IN THE STREETS BELOW *RUNNING*...
"BUT I CAN'T TURN AROUND TO SEE WHAT THEY'RE RUNNING *FROM*... I CAN'T EVEN BRING MYSELF TO MOVE...

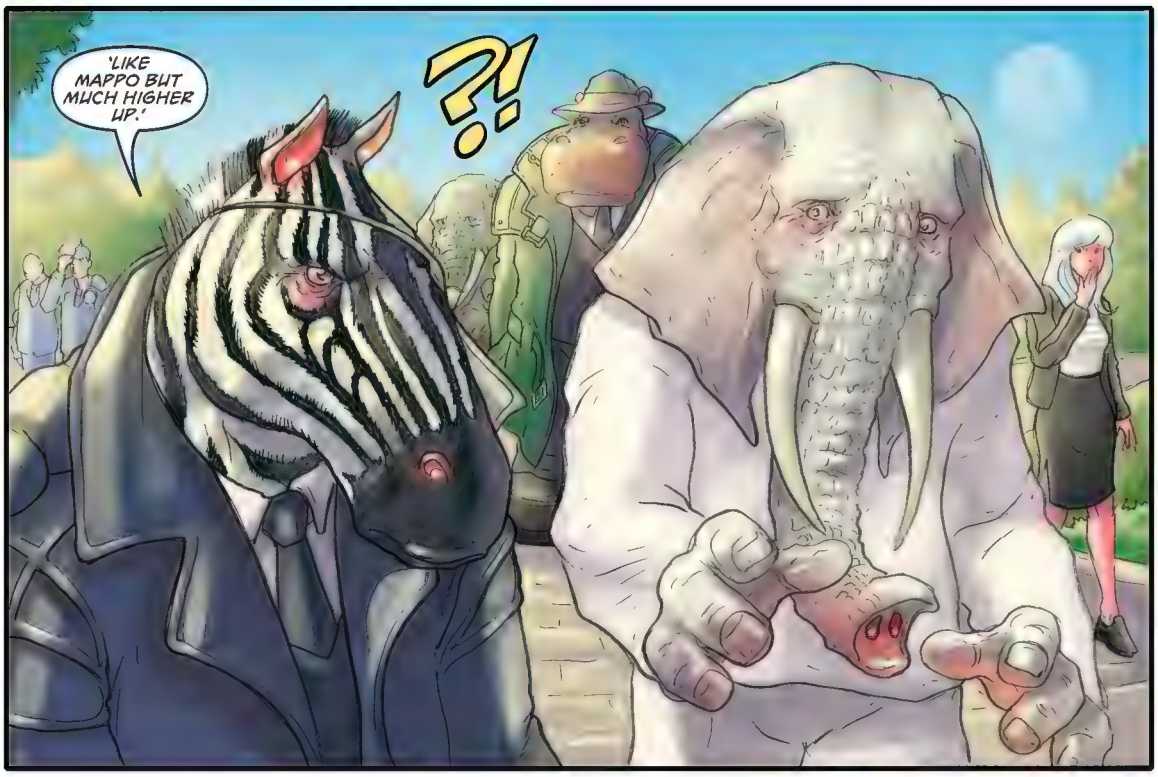
"A CHILL RUNS UP MY SPINE AND I REALIZE IT'S JULY FOURTH, 2225...
"INDEPENDENCE DAY.

"ANY MOMENT NOW, THE DEVICE IS GOING TO BE ACTIVATED.
"I CAN SMELL THE CORDITE HANGING IN THE AIR FROM THE CRASHED DRONE.
"I CAN SMELL THE FEAR OF THE PEOPLE BELOW.
"AFTER TODAY, AMERICA WON'T CARE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS IN EUROPE JUST A COUPLE OF YEARS LATER.
"PEOPLE STILL WONDER ABOUT THE EVENTS OF THAT DAY...
"NOT ME. AS I STARE OUT THE WINDOW AT THE CHAOS DOWN BELOW, I KNOW FOR CERTAIN, THIS WAS NO ACCIDENT...


"THIS WAS DESIGN.
"COLD
"CALCULATED
"DESIGN.
"YET EVEN AS THAT SENSE OF CERTAINTY PERMEATES EVERY BONE IN MY BODY, I REALIZE I'M MISSING SOMETHING.
"THIS IS NOT ABOUT THE DAY NEW YORK CITY WAS FLATTENED UNDER A MUSHROOM CLOUD...
"THIS IS ABOUT ME.
"WHY CAN'T I MOVE?
"WHAT IS IT I CAN'T SEE?
"WHAT IS IT I'M MISSING?


"I'M FEELING ANXIOUS, TENSE, BUT I BITE DOWN ON MY LIP AND STAY FROZEN TO THE SPOT.
"MY HEAD STARTS TO POUND AND MY PULSE RATE QUICKENS.
"THAT'S IT. I GET IT NOW.
"THIS HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH *MAPPO*.
"AND THEN ANOTHER CHILL RUNS UP MY SPINE AS A VOICE BEHIND ME WHISPERS SOFTLY...

"I CAN'T QUITE MAKE OUT THE WORDS...
"BUT AT THAT EXACT MOMENT, I FEEL AN INTENSE BURNING THRILL AT THE BACK OF MY NECK...
"AND SUDDENLY ALL THE LIGHTS IN THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING BLINK OUT.
"THEN HEAVY SNOWFLAKES START FALLING.
"AS I WAKE, SHUDDERING FROM THE COLD, I HEAR THAT VOICE AGAIN, LOUDER, *INSISTENT* THIS TIME..."


'LIKE MAPPO BUT MUCH HIGHER UP.'
?!

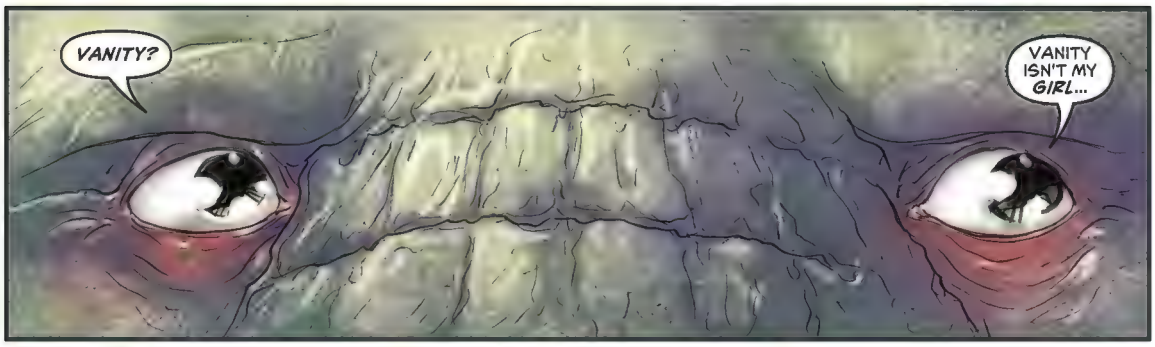
WHAT YOU GOT THERE, A FREAKIN' NOSEBLEED?
AND THEY PUT YOU IN A WHEELCHAIR?! MY HEART CRIES FOR YOU.

LOOK AT ME.

IF I GET OUT OF MY WHEELCHAIR, IT'S ONLY BECAUSE HE LIFTS ME UP.
I'M PARALYZED PRETTY MUCH FROM THE NECK DOWN. ONLY GOT THE USE OF THE ONE ARM.

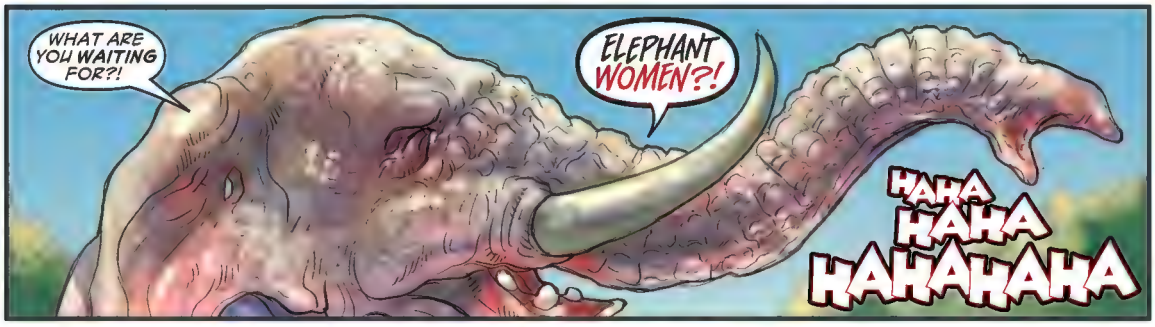
D'YA KNOW HOW MUCH OMAR HERE GETS FOR CHANGING MY COLOSTOMY BAG?
HEH, MORE THAN THE AGENCY PAYS YOU.

MIND YOU, I'D RATHER HAVE YOUR GIRL THERE PLAY WITH ME.


VANITY?
VANITY ISN'T MY GIRL...

WHAT? YOU HAVE ALL YOUR LIMBS AND YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANY ACTION WITH YER LITTLE HOTTIE?
THEY LOVE BEING WITH TRANSGENICS, Y' KNOW -- HAVE HER PLAY WITH YOUR TRUNK IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN...
NIBBLE YOUR EARS. HEH.

LICK YER TUSKS!


WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?!
ELEPHANT WOMEN?!
HAHA HAHA HAHAHAHA

LIKE THAT WILL EVER HAPPEN...
I THINK NIKKEN LIKED BOYS.

HE'D HAVE LOVED GIGANTOR HERE.
THIS GUY HAS TO SLEEP NEXT TO ME EVERY NIGHT AND I'VE SEEN HIS JUNK.
HUNG LIKE ONE O'THOSE GENETICALLY ENHANCED SHIRE HORSES THEY USED TA HAVE US RIDE!
HEY!
IT'S A FREAKIN' COMPLIMENT! JEEZ!

LIEUTENANT, PLEASE, *SHARE* WITH ME... WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE *SIGNIFICANCE* OF YOUR DREAM?
THE LIGHTS GOING OUT? WHAT IS THAT DARKNESS?
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND THE WAY I AM FORCED TO SEE THE WORLD?

"WHEN MEN SENT US TO WAR, THEY TAUGHT US EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT *DARKNESS*.

"THEY SAW US AS ANIMALS -- WORKHORSES -- BUT FORGOT THAT SPARK OF *HUMANITY* THAT SEPARATED US FROM SIMPLE BEASTS.
PLEASE... NO....
NO MORE...
STOP

"AND WHEN THAT HUMANITY THREATENED TO GET IN THE WAY OF WHAT WE WERE DOING...

"NANOTECHNOLOGY -- THE *IMPERIUMITE* CHIPS IMPLANTED AT THE TOP OF OUR SPINES -- MADE SURE WE STAYED ON MISSION.
BRAKATABRAKA

DOES THE DARKNESS *EVER* END, GABBATHA?
"JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, A MAN-MADE METEOR FELL IN SANTA MONICA BAY...
"RIGHT ON THE *BEACH*. INNOCENT HOLIDAYMAKERS WERE STILL THERE ENJOYING THE SUNSET.*
"ANYONE CLOSE ENOUGH WHEN THAT ROCK CRACKED OPEN DIED WITHIN *MINUTES*...
*See ELEPHANTMEN #13-15
"IT WAS THE *FCN VIRUS*, THE SAME PLAGUE THAT WIPED OUT HALF OF EUROPE BEFORE THE WAR...
"THOSE THAT WERE IN THE IMMEDIATE CATCHMENT AREA WERE ROUNDED UP AND TAKEN TO A DECONTAMINATION UNIT...
"MOST OF THEM DIED RIGHT THERE ON THE BEACH. THEY WERE ALL INFECTED.
"SEEMED LIKE WE COULDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT...
"OTHER THAN WATCH THEM DIE...

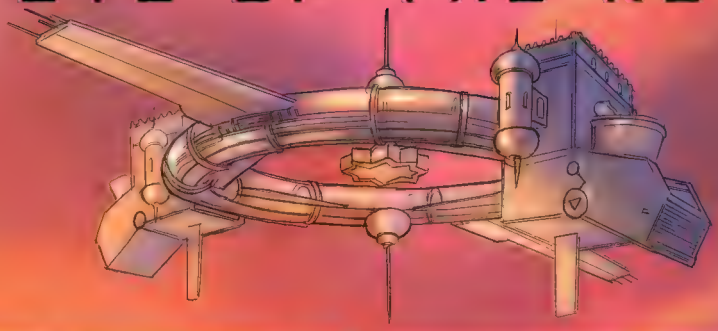
SO WE WERE TOLD TO GAS THE REST.
AT THE FLICK OF A SWITCH.
THAT'S THE TRUE NATURE OF LIFE. YOUR LIGHT IS EITHER ON OR OFF.
ONE MOMENT, THERE'S A BUILDING FULL OF PEOPLE, DESPERATELY CLINGING TO LIFE.
THE NEXT MINUTE AN ORDER IS GIVEN AND THAT'S IT.
LIGHTS' OUT.
YOU THINK WE'VE COME THAT FAR AS ELEPHANTMEN, MY FRIEND?
THEY SENT ME TO EUROPE TO MOP UP. KILL SURVIVORS OF THE VIRUS.
THEN THEY REHABILITATED ME, TOLD ME I HAD A BETTER FUTURE...
THEN THEY SENT ME TO LOS ANGELES, AND I'M KILLING PEOPLE AGAIN.
IT DOESN'T TAKE A SMALL NUKE TO DO IT.
OR A ROCK FILLED WITH GERMS.
JUST A GOOD SOLDIER READY TO FOLLOW ORDERS.
WE'RE NOT REHABILITATED -- WE'RE JUST REPROGRAMMED. WE'RE STILL IN A HOLDING PEN, IT'S JUST INVISIBLE TO THE EYE.
Hmm.
YOU SUFFER BECAUSE YOUR MIND CONTINUES TO BE DRENCHED BY FEAR AND HATRED.
THE TREASURES OF THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU, BUT YOU ARE A PRISONER IN YOUR HEART BECAUSE YOU REFUSE TO BELIEVE OTHERWISE.
YOU MUST FIND SHELTER FROM SUFFERING. SEEK A GREAT TREE. A PHILOSOPHY OF HOPE RATHER THAN FEAR.
HOPE? YOU CRAZY BUDDHIST.
IN THIS CITY, THAT KIND OF TALK GETS YOU KILLED.

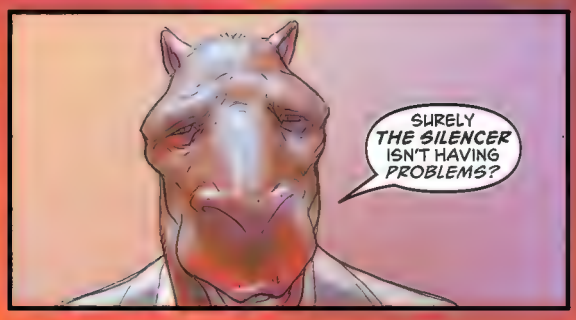
DID HE SAY, "LIKE MAPPO..."
Hunh ...BUT MUCH HIGHER UP...?
YOU HAVE HAD THE SAME DREAM?
NOT THAT DREAM... BUT THOSE SAME WORDS...*
IT WAS COLD... I COULDN'T MOVE...
Hmm. WHEN WERE THE THREE OF YOU LAST TOGETHER?
THE BEACH.
YEAH, THE METEOR...
INTERESTING. I WONDER IF... EBONY?
EBONY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
GABBATHA--?
"I'D SEE THEM ALL DEAD!"

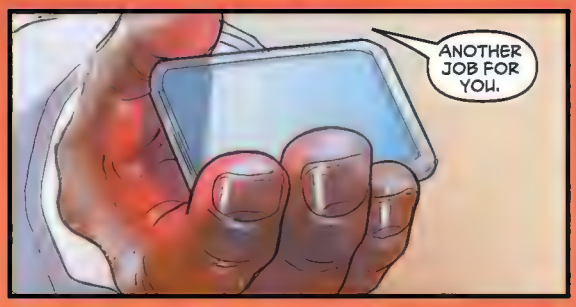
THESE FOUL SPAWN OF MAPPO AREN'T MERELY UNGODLY, THEY ARE UNNATURAL!
LESSER CREATURES THAN MAN WOULD HAVE BEEN APPALLED BY THE SIGHT OF THEM AND LEFT THEM TO DIE.
WHEN I WAS SENATOR FOR MISSOURI, I VOTED AGAINST THE ELEPHANTMEN ACT. NOT BECAUSE IT RESTRICTED THEIR FREEDOMS, BUT BECAUSE IT AWARDED THEM TOO MANY!
THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN PUT TO DEATH IN THE U.N CAMPS!
THE REVEREND PERRY FALBERTSON IS SPEAKING TO US FROM OKLAHOMA ON BEHALF OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD COALITION.
HE'S A REAL PICKLE, ISN'T HE?
MEANTIME, THE POPULARITY OF OBADIAH HORN IS AT A HIGH.
THE ATTEMPT ON HORN'S LIFE, COUPLED WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT SAHARA IS BEARING HIS CHILD HAS WON THEM PUBLIC SYMPATHY AND INTEREST.*
GABBATHA, SPIRITUAL LEADER NOT ONLY TO THE ELEPHANTMEN BUT ALSO MANY ORDINARY PEOPLE, HAS SUGGESTED THAT THE TRANSGENICS ARE REALLY JUST AS HUMAN AS WE ARE...
SURELY TO BE HUMAN IS NOT ABOUT ONE'S OUTWARD APPEARANCE, BUT ONE'S ACTIONS AND REGARD FOR OTHERS.
AND WHO APPOINTED HIM A SPIRITUAL LEADER?
MUNTS SHOULD BE FORBIDDEN ANY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION.
WELL, LIFE ISN'T ALWAYS FULL OF SURPRISES, I GUESS... I'M IVY REGINA...
REVEREND FALBERTSON ENDED OUR INTERVIEW WITH THESE WORDS...
THEY ARE SOULLESS -- MAN HOLDS DOMINION OVER ANIMAL. THIS IS NOT A CIVIL RIGHTS ISSUE, THIS IS A MATTER OF GOD'S WILL ON EARTH.
WHEN A LOWLIFE WOMAN LIES DOWN WITH SUCH A CREATURE AND IS ALLOWED TO GIVE BIRTH TO SOME HYBRID BEAST...
...EVERY MAN ON EARTH IS DESTINED FOR DAMNATION.
SIGH IF YOU ONLY KNEW...

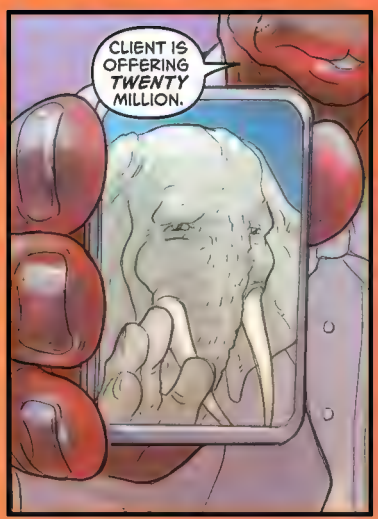
YOU AND HORN.
YOUR SHIT KEEPS HITTING THE FAN.
LOTS OF ROUGHAGE. WE'RE BIG EATERS.
HIP... THE POWERS THAT BE... WELL...
THEY'VE ASKED ME TO TELL YOU...
ASK YOU...
TO CURB YOUR APPETITES...
THIS ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING SAHARA... IT CAN'T END WELL. ANY MORE THAN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MIKI...
YOU WANT ME TO CALL IT OFF WITH MIKI?
MUD'S BLOOD! I WAS SUPPOSED TO MEET HER AT THE AGENCY YESTERDAY --
OH MAN, SHE IS GOING TO BE PISSED!
OR KEEP SEEING HER, I'M SURE THAT'S WHAT THEY MEANT...

THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE









SANTA MONICA
THANKS, ALTO. I NEEDED A NIGHT OUT. A NORMAL NIGHT OUT.
WELL, THAT GOES FOR ME TOO, WORKING FOR HORN INDUSTRIES ISN'T WITHOUT IT'S, UH, DRAMA.
WHAT'S OBADIAH HORN'S DEAL? WHAT KEEPS SAHARA WITH HIM?
HOW DOES THAT WORK?
THEY'RE NOT LIKE OTHER COUPLES, MIKI.
HOW COULD THEY BE?
IT'S NOT JUST SAHARA AND HORN, IT'S SAHARA AND ALL ELEPHANTMEN... SHE'S BEEN A PART OF THEIR HISTORY HER ENTIRE LIFE.
HER OWN MOTHER GAVE BIRTH TO ONE OF THEIR KIND.*
SHE UNDERSTANDS THEM IN A WAY NO ONE ELSE CAN.
AND SHE UNDERSTANDS THE PUBLIC TOO...
PEOPLE SEE HORN AND SAHARA THE WAY PEOPLE USED TO SEE KINGS AND QUEENS... IT'S NO ACCIDENT HORN CALLS HIS HOME IVORY TOWERS. HE KNOWS HOW TO PLAY CELEBRITY.
BUT, MIKI, THOSE ARE MEAN STREETS OUT THERE.
YOU HAVE TO BE CAREFUL.
Oh.

YOU WANT TO COME INSIDE?
JUST TO TALK...
YEAH, JUST TO TALK.
IT'S HARD TO FIND SOMEONE TO TRUST THESE DAYS, ISN'T IT?
To Be Continued!

"A PERSON'S SEXUAL CHOICE IS THE RESULT AND SUM OF THEIR FUNDAMENTAL CONVICTIONS. SHOW ME THE PERSON THEY SLEEP WITH AND I WILL TELL YOU THEIR VALUATION OF THEMSELVES."

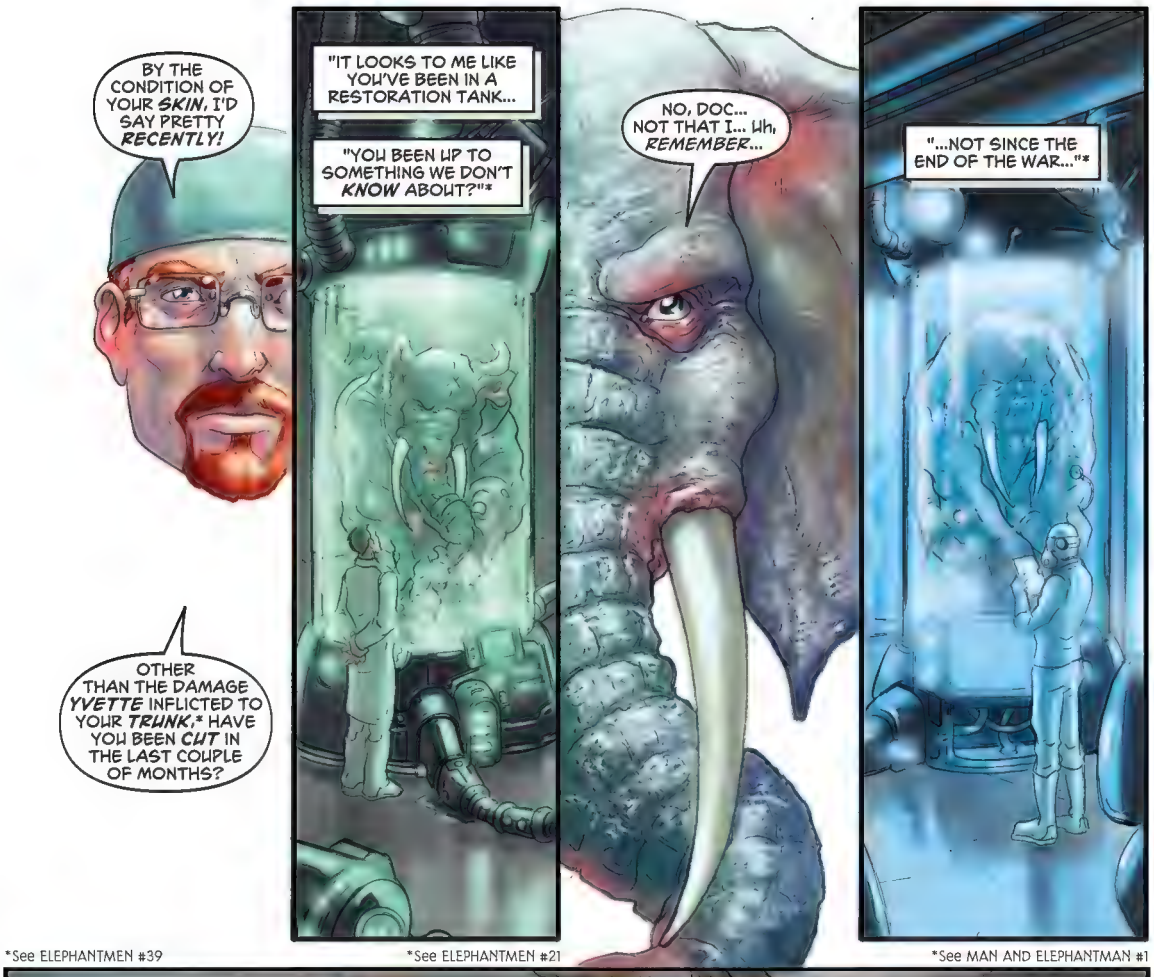
AYN RAND

image
ELEPHANTMEN
#45
SLEEPING PARTNERS
PART FOUR
THE ELEPHANT MAN
AND OTHER REMINISCENCES
STARKINGS • MEDELLIN • LOTAY • ROSHELL • MENG

SLEEPING PARTNERS
PART FOUR

EARTHLY DESIRES *Are* ENLIGHTENMENT

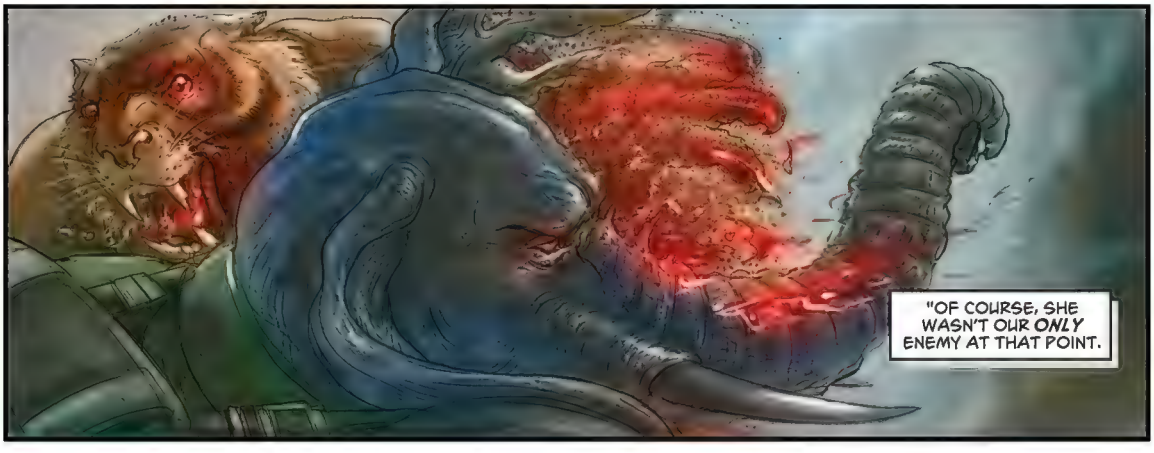
Richard Starkings Words Axel Medellin Pictures
Dream Sequence Art by Tula Lotay



*See ELEPHANTMEN #39

*See ELEPHANTMEN #21

*See MAN AND ELEPHANTMAN #1



"YVETTE HAD LEFT ME AND HIP TO DIE,* AND IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THE BLACK DRAGONS FOUND US...
"I WOULD HAVE WELCOMED RELEASE FROM THIS WORLD...
"...BUT IT WAS NOT TO BE...
FTOOM FTOOM
FTOOM
"AN EXTRACTION TEAM WAS RIGHT BEHIND US, READY TO CLEAN US UP AND PUT US BACK ON THE FRONTLINES...
SEVEN... OVER THERE...
MAY STILL BE ALIVE...
*See ELEPHANTMEN #35

"GABBATHA... HIS SKIN LOOKED WHITE TO ME, HIS EYES KIND... HE WAS NOT LIKE OTHER ELEPHANTMEN THEN, ANY MORE THAN HE IS NOW.

"BUT FOR WHAT?
FTOOM FTOOM
"OF COURSE EVERY SINGLE ONE OF MAPPO'S FOOTSOLDIERS CARRIED A DOLLAR VALUE... TWENTY MILLION EACH.
"STITCH 'EM, FIX 'EM, SEND 'EM BACK IN...
WHI-WHI-- WHITE ELEPHANT... PLEASE...
LEAVE ME, LET-- LET ME DIE...
WHITE?
Hm. NO, MY FRIEND, YOU MUST LIVE.
BUT PLEASE DON'T WORRY...
FOR CENTURIES, THE IMAGE OF A WHITE ELEPHANT HAS BEEN KNOWN AS THE BRINGER OF GOOD FORTUNE...
MY FRIEND, STAY AWAKE...
Listen...

...over Three Thousand Years Ago, in the North of India, pure-hearted Queen Maha Maya fell asleep on the night of a Full Moon.

As she slept, the Queen had a vivid dream of a Beautiful Lotus Flower, out of which emerged a stunning White Elephant.

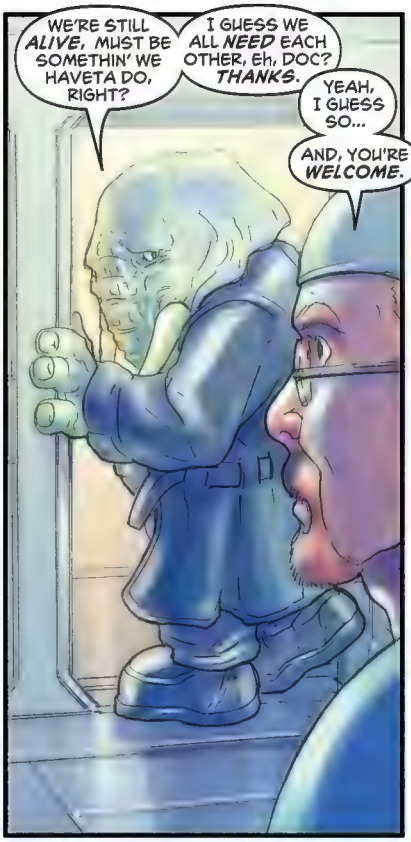
In her dream, the Queen danced with the White Elephant which circled her with Pure Joy, went round her three times...
...and then entered her Womb... disappearing just as Mystically as he had appeared. When the Queen woke, she spoke of her vision to the King.

The King summoned a Brahman to interpret the Queen's Dream, and was told that his wife would soon bear him a son...
Although the King was overjoyed, the Brahman cautioned; If the Prince never left the Palace, he would become a Despotic Ruler...
However, if he left the Palace, He would become a Holy Man, The Wisest Man in All of India; The World Honoured One!
Soon, the Queen did indeed give birth to a Beautiful Baby Boy. They named him Siddhartha, or "One Who has Accomplished a Goal."

There followed Seven Days of Joy and Harmony in the Palace; Food and Clothes were given to the Poor in Celebration...
But the Queen died suddenly, and the King was stricken with Grief. Now, his son was all that he had to remind him of his Lost Love...
Thenceforth, he decided that the Prince would never leave the Palace walls lest he suffer as he had suffered...
Nevertheless, in the Kingdom, Women continued to give Birth.
Men still fell Victim to Disease, Their Mothers still Grew Old...
Those that Men and Women Loved, still Died...
Safe inside the Palace Walls, the Prince had no understanding of the Miracle of his Birth or of the Tragedy of his Mother's Death.

How could he?
ONLY WHEN HE LEFT THE PALACE...
ONLY WHEN HE HAD EXPERIENCED LIFE'S SORROWS HIMSELF...
ONLY THEN DID SIDDHARTHA GUATAMA BECOME A BUDDHA.
PUT ME IN A PALACE, GABBATHA...
BELIEVE ME... I KNOW ABOUT LIFE'S SORROWS
MAPPO WILL JUST... FIX ME UP... SEND ME BACK... FOR MORE.
YOU'RE STILL ALIVE, THERE MUST BE MUCH FOR YOU TO DO.
:KAFF: YOU BEEN LISTENING TO KUBEC...* YOU GOTTA... STOP.
:KOFF: THAT CRAZY OLD MAN IS... :KAFF: DANGEROUS...
*See ELEPHANTMEN #40
HOLD UP!
LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE ANOTHER ONE COMING IN!
OUFF
"Hah, THINK OF IT... BACK THEN HORN WAS ONLY WORTH TWENTY MILLION...
GET ME ONBOARD!
"IF HE'D BEEN LEFT TO DIE IN THE MUD... HE'D BE WORTH NOTHING NOW.
QUICKLY!

OBADIAH HORN? SAVED AT THE LAST MINUTE?
THAT'S RICH.
AS RICH AS CROESUS.
I BET HE SPENDS TWENTY MILL A DAY NOW!
BAD DECISIONS MAKE GREAT STORIES, DON'T THEY? YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT, DOC.
WHAT?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WELL, THE U.N KEPT US ALIVE. WHAT WOULD YOUR LIFE HAVE BEEN LIKE WITHOUT US, DOC?
EVER THOUGHT OF THAT?
Hunh... NO, I GUESS I KINDA TAKE YOU GUYS FOR GRANTED.
IF NOT FOR GABBATHA, I WOULDN'T BE HERE NOW...
"AND IF WE'D LEFT HORN BEHIND, I MIGHT HAVE DIED ON MARS TEN YEARS AGO.

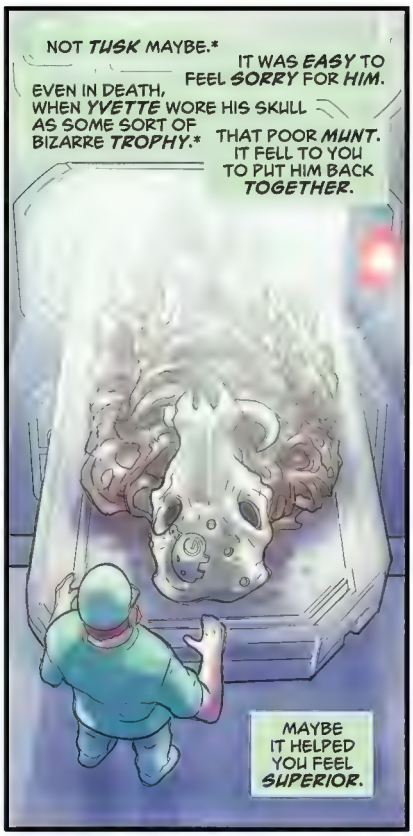


THEY LOOK UP TO YOU.

RESPECT YOU.

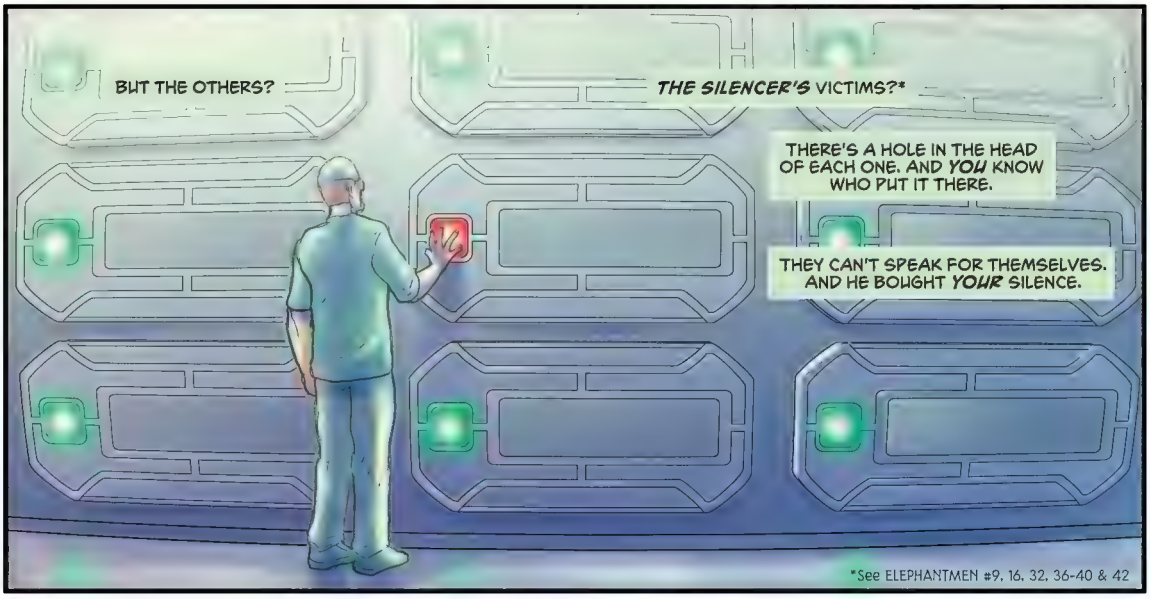
AND WHAT DO YOU DO?

YOU LOOK DOWN ON THEM.



*See ELEPHANTMEN #4, 15, 17

*See ELEPHANTMEN #36-39



*See ELEPHANTMEN #9, 16, 32, 36-40 & 42

AND THE ONLY REASON YOU'RE REFLECTING ON THIS SITUATION NOW?

THE SILENCER KILLED YOUR DOG.

ELEPHANTMEN DIE EVERY DAY, BUT SOMEHOW YOUR PET HAS A SPECIAL MORAL STATUS?

BAD DECISIONS MAKE GOOD STORIES?

ONLY IF YOU LIVE TO TELL THE TALES, DOC.

HE WOKE UP NEAR THE E-Z CLEAN.

HAD HE BEEN IN FIGHT...?
DID HE FALL?
DID SOMETHING FALL ON HIM?
HE REMEMBERS WALKING AIMLESSLY THROUGH THE CITY...
BUT HE WAS TRYING NOT TO REMEMBER...
LOSE HIMSELF...
HE WAS TRYING TO FORGET A LOT OF THINGS.
IT WASN'T AS EASY AS HE'D HOPED...

BUT HE LOST IT ALRIGHT.
ENOUGH!
KZZKKT
UNNH!
AHRR!
SKRRNNCH
GRAHR!
KRUNCH

WHNCH
ZZZKT
WHAMM

FRKRASH
WHOA!
DUDE! CHILL! THAT'S THE REAL THING, MAN... THIRST QUENCHING, TOO.
I GET IT, MAN... YOU HAD A BAD DAY...
YOU JUST HAD TO HIT SOMETHING, RIGHT?
BUT YOU'RE GOOD NOW, RIGHT...
YOU'RE GOOD...
SOMEHOW HE MUST HAVE MADE HIS WAY HOME...

HOW DID EVERYTHING GO SO HORRIBLY WRONG...?
MIKI...
SHE'D GROWN CLOSE TO HIM IN JUST A FEW SHORT WEEKS...
ARE YOU OKAY, BIG GUY?
ALLOWED HIM TO FEEL HUMAN...
HIP...
EVEN AFTER SHE HAD SEEN THE MONSTER INSIDE HIM...*
JUST STAY AWAY FROM ME!
SHE STILL CAME BACK TO HIM...
LOVED HIM.
HE HADN'T FELT THAT WAY FOR A LONG, LONG TIME...
SINCE MARS...
Oh, HIERONYMOUS, MY LOVE...
I WONDER IF YOU TRULY KNOW OF MY FEELINGS FOR YOU...
SO, BACK TO SQUARE ONE.
AGAIN.
UM... HEY BOSS... ARE YOU OKAY?
I, UH... I WAS WORRIED..
SO I CALLED MIKI...
SHE'S, UH, ON HER WAY OVER....
THAT'S GOOD,? RIGHT
*See ELEPHANTMEN #24-30

SANTA MONICA, 2259
COMMUNICATIONS
HOT STUFF
GET IT ALL-DAY ALL-NIGHT
EVERYONE WANTS TO GET THEIR HANDS ON OUR RIBS, OR DIVE INTO OUR SURF AND TURF
HOOTERS
ASK ABOUT OUR CRAB LEGS
ARE THE REAL DEAL!
321

HEY, EBONY, GRU FIGURED YOU'D BE DOWN HERE...
HOW ARE YOU, BIG GUY?
UH, FINE, I WAS JUST, Y'KNOW, SCHRODT GAVE ME A CHECK UP -- THE ALL CLEAR...
HOW'S YOUR TRUNK FEELING...
UH, LIKE NEW... BUT, UM SENSITIVE.
SEE, ALL YOU NEEDED WAS A LITTLE T-L-C!
T-L-C?
YOU KNOW... TENDER LOVING CARE!
VANITY... I-- I LOVE YOU TOO...
!

EBONY! NO... I--
HEY! YOU GET YOUR DIRTY HANDS OFF OF HER YOU BIG APE!
IT'S OKAY...
I SEEN YA OUT HERE--
I DIDN'T--
YOU'RE LIKE ANY OTHER UGLY GUY... JUST OGLING THE GIRLS, LONGING TO TOUCH US UP, RIGHT?
NO, IT'S OKAY, WE WORK TOGETHER, HE'S NOT -- I MEAN...
HE'S HAD A ROUGH TIME LATELY...
HE DIDN'T MEAN ANY HARM... RIGHT, EBONY...
EBONY ?

WELL EX-CUUSE ME FOR HAVING A COFFEE WITH A FRIEND!
HOW WAS I TO KNOW YOU WERE GOING TO KEEP ME WAITING FOR TWO HOURS WHILE YOU WERE WITH ONE OF YOUR OTHER GIRLS!
I --
WAS AT --
-- A FUNERAL!
AND I SAW YOU KISS THAT GUY!
WERE YOU SPYING ON ME?!
YOU WERE OUTSIDE MY HOUSE?
STOPPING BY MY GIRLFRIEND'S HOUSE IS SPYING?
WERE YOU AFRAID I'D SEE YOU TOPLESS THROUGH YOUR WINDOW?
Oh, WAIT, EVERYONE CAN SEE YOUR TITS ANYWAY!
YOU DON'T LIKE MY BOOBS?
THAT'S NOT THE IMPRESSION I GOT--
WHEN YOU WERE LICKING THEM!
MIKI...
YOU WERE KISSING HIM!
SO?!
YOU HAVE A PICTURE OF SAHARA ON YOUR DESK!
SAHARA...?

SAHARA AND I...
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND, WE'RE NOT...
WE WEREN'T...
UM, BOSS, IS THIS A GOOD MOMENT...?
I GOT GRUENWALD ON HOLD FOR YOU...
FLASK -- WHAT'S KEEPING YOU?
TRENCH HAS GOT MORE GRUNT WORK FOR YOU...
MISSING PERSONS... DOWNTOWN. GUESS YOU'RE STILL ON HIS SHITLIST.
I'M ON IT -- SEND ME THE ADDRESS THERE.
MIKI, I NEED A RIDE DOWNTOWN... CAN YOU, UH...
FINE.
BUT THIS CONVERSATION IS NOT OVER.
NO IT IS NOT!
LET'S GO...

*See ELEPHANTMEN #42

To Be Continued!

ELEPHANTMEN
FALL, HIP FLASK! FALL BEFORE SPORE!
=GASP=
YOU'RE INFECTED!
AND THERE'S NO KNOWN CURE, SWEETCHEEKS.
image
#46
$3.99
STAR KINGS · SHAKY KANE · ROSHELL · COOK

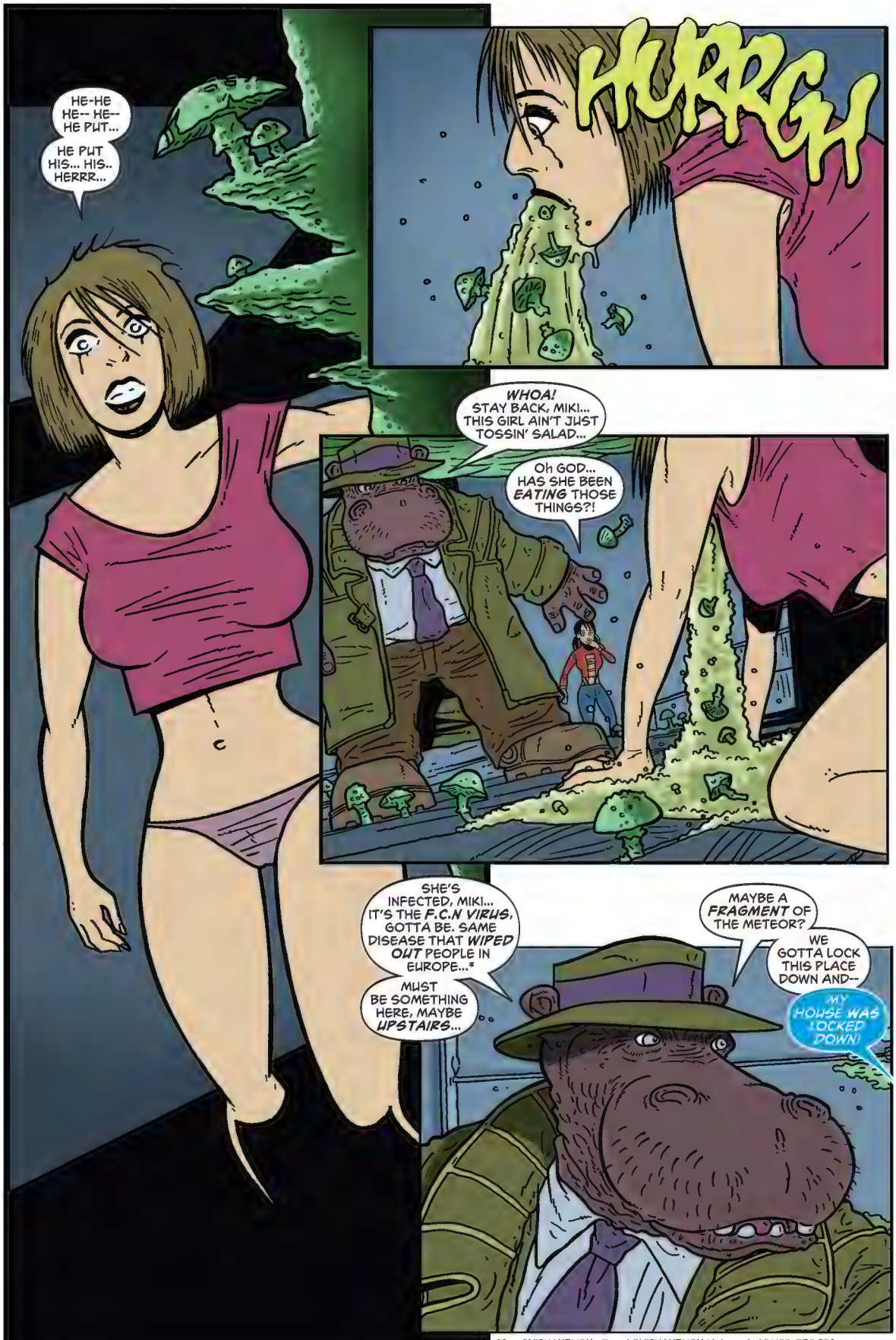
"DOUBT IS TO CERTAINTY AS NEUROSIS IS TO PSYCHOSIS. THE NEUROTIC IS IN DOUBT AND HAS FEARS ABOUT PERSONS AND THINGS; THE PSYCHOTIC HAS CONVICTIONS AND MAKES CLAIMS ABOUT THEM.

"IN SHORT, THE NEUROTIC HAS PROBLEMS, THE PSYCHOTIC HAS SOLUTIONS."

THOMAS SZASZ

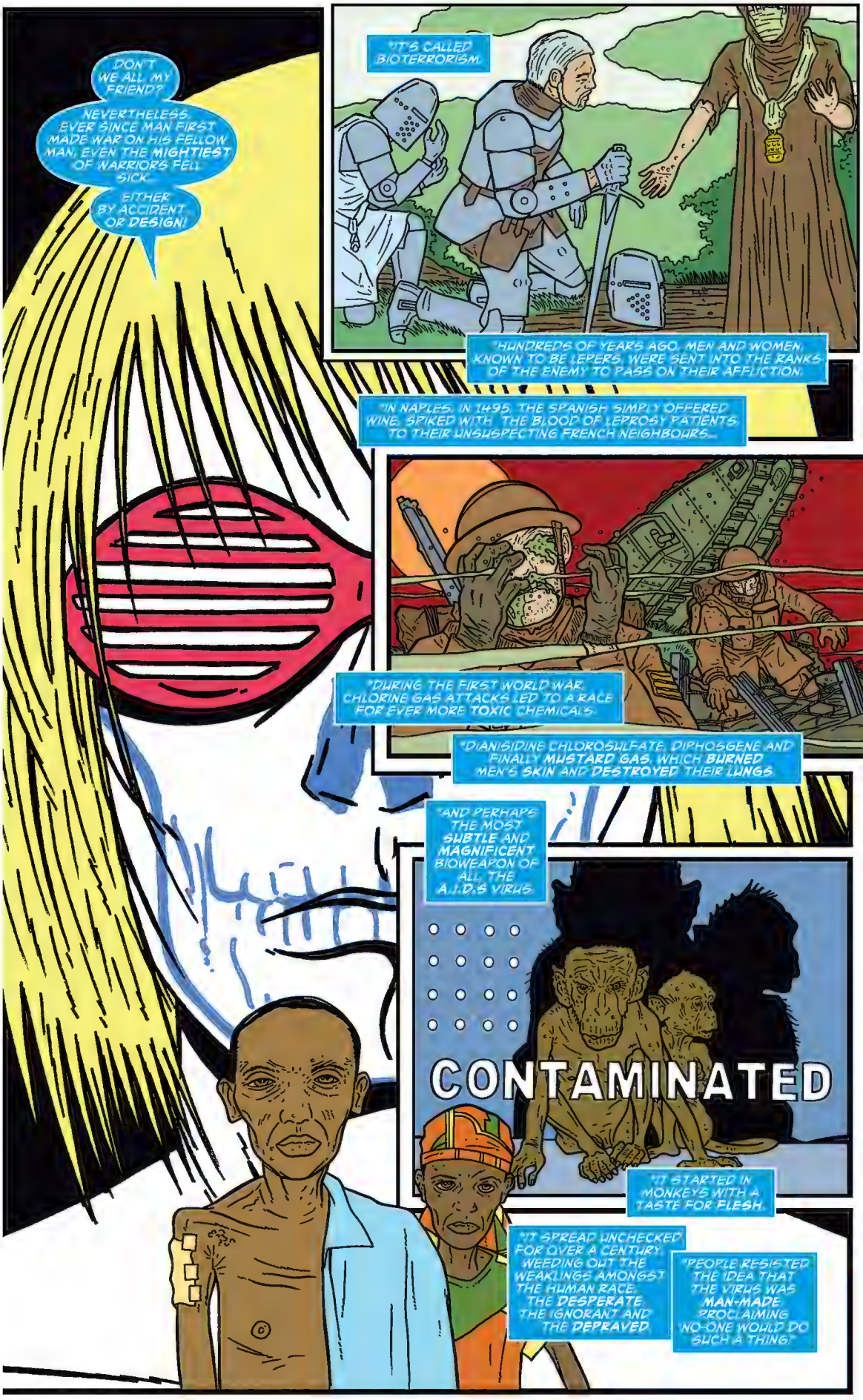
DOWNTOWN L.A.
SLEEPING PARTNERS
PART FIVE
The KALPA of DECREASE
Words
Richard Starkings
Shaky Kane
Pictures
Rob Steen Colors
Boo Goo
THIS PLACE LOOKS SHADIER THAN YOUR NEW BOYFRIEND.
YEAH, AND YOU'RE GOING IN ALONE IF YOU KEEP UP WITH THAT KIND OF CRAP.

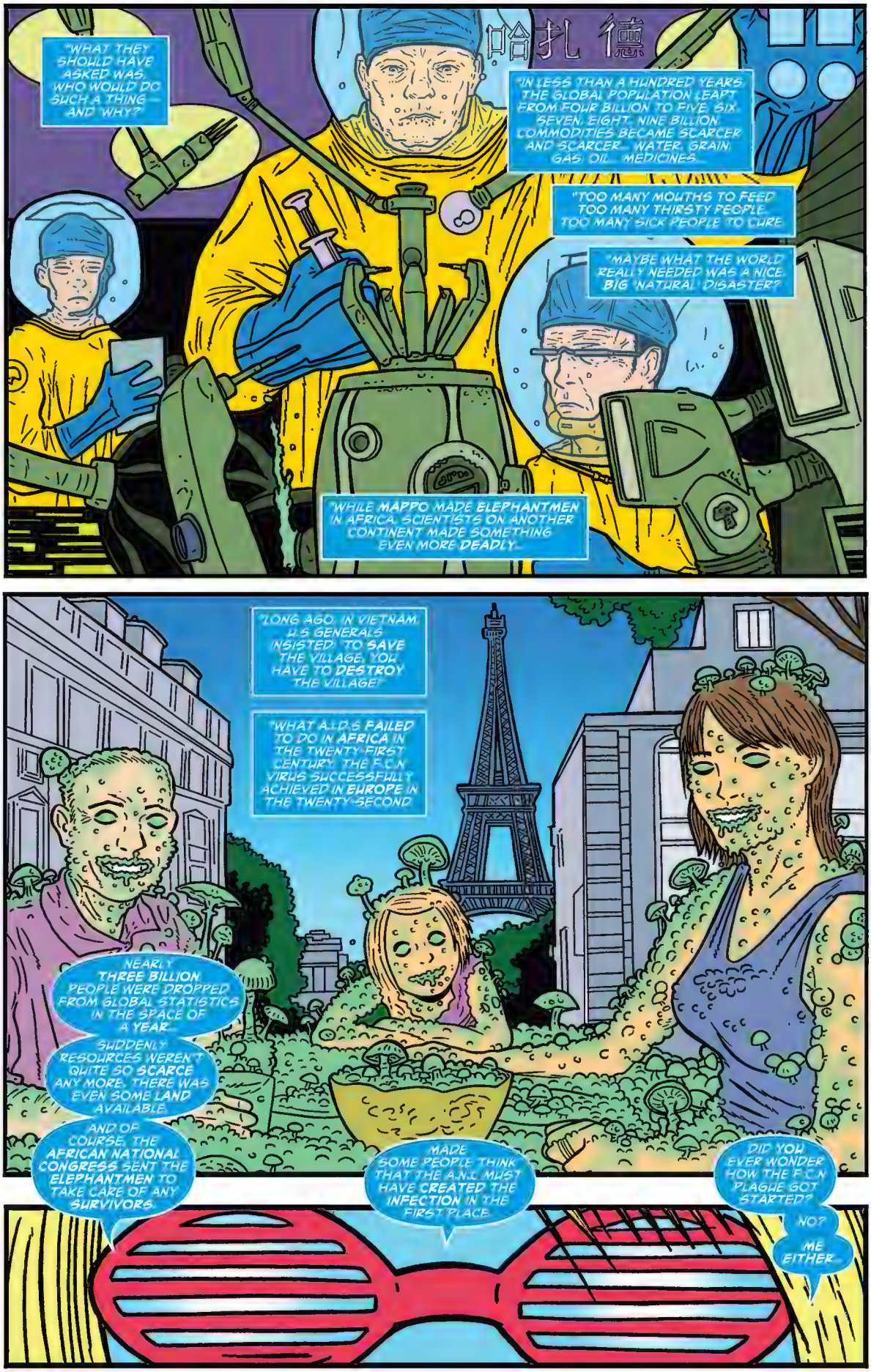
*See ELEPHANTMEN #9-15

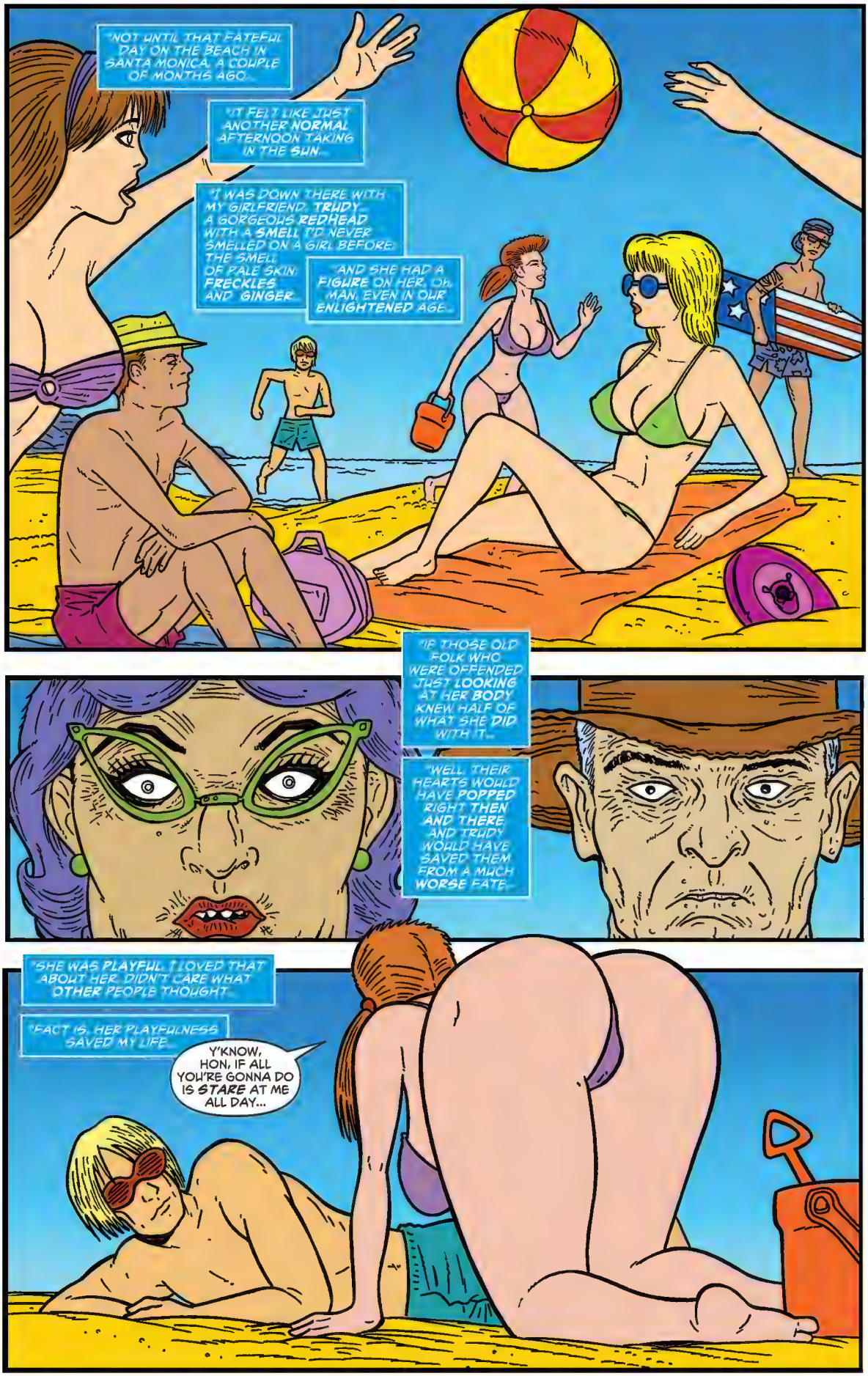


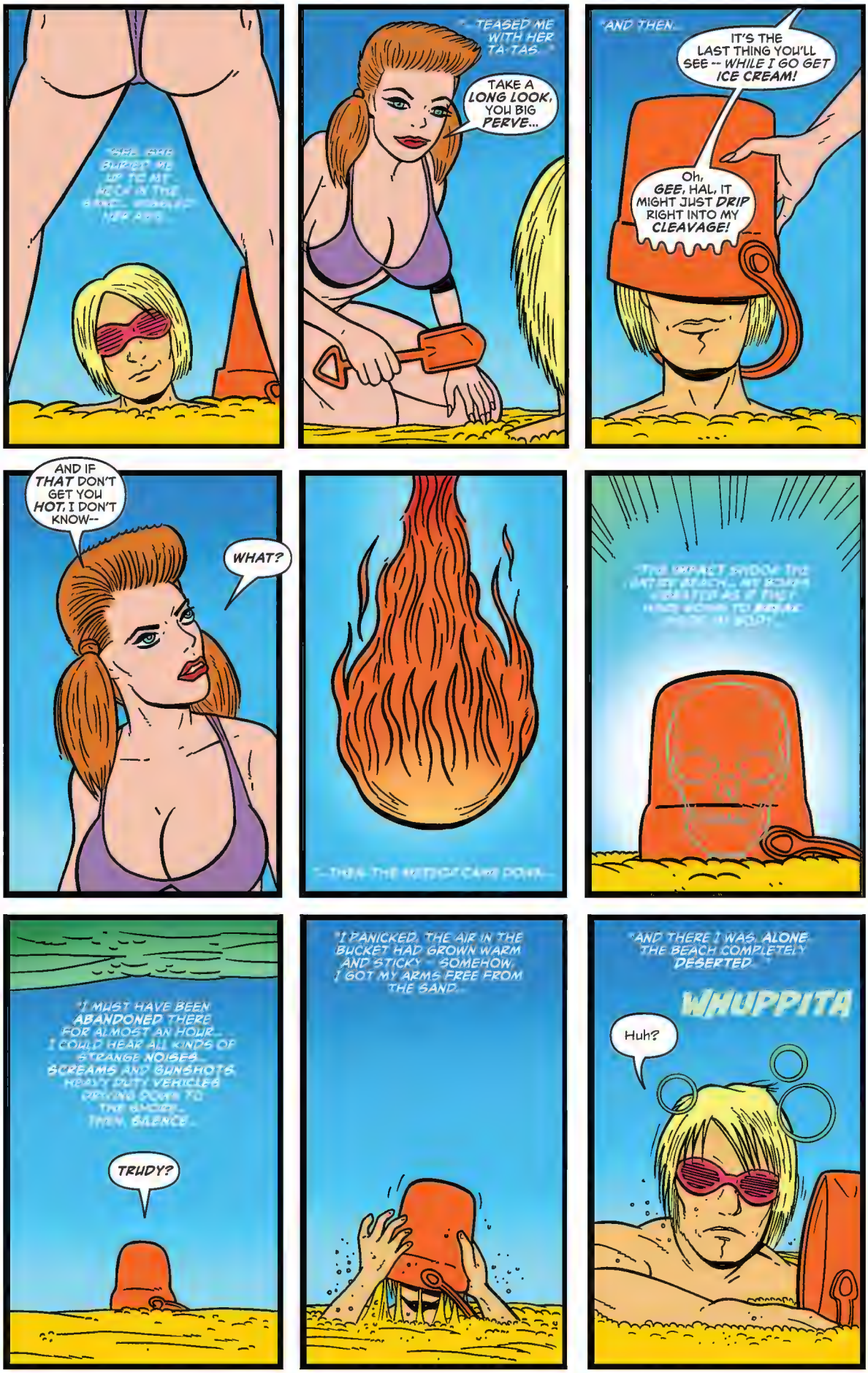
*See ELEPHANTMEN #11 and ELEPHANTMEN Volume 1: ARMED FORCES

BUT, I OPENED IT UP AGAIN FOR YOU.
I AM HARRY HAZARD, OF THE HUNTINGTON BEACH HAZARDS, BUT YOU CAN CALL ME HAL
THE MEN IN THE MOON SENT YOU, DIDN'T THEY?
THEY MUST WANT YOU DEAD
AND I'M ALWAYS HAPPY TO OBLIGE...
ACKK--
MEN... IN THE MOON?!
THIS CAN'T BE -- HAPPENING!
"DO YOU FEEL IT, MUNT? DO YOU FEEL MY DISEASE INSIDE YOU?"
THE VIRUS!
SPORING INSIDE MY BODY!
BUT... I'M IMMUNE!
"IS THAT WHAT THEY TOLD YOU? DID YOU THINK YOURSELF IMMORTAL?"


DON'T WE ALL, MY FRIEND?
NEVERTHELESS, EVER SINCE MAN FIRST MADE WAR ON HIS FELLOW MAN, EVEN THE MIGHTIEST OF WARRIORS FELL SICK...
EITHER BY ACCIDENT OR DESIGN!
"IT'S CALLED BIOTERRORISM.
"HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO, MEN AND WOMEN, KNOWN TO BE LEPERS, WERE SENT INTO THE RANKS OF THE ENEMY TO PASS ON THEIR AFFLICTION.
"IN NAPLES, IN 1495, THE SPANISH SIMPLY OFFERED WINE, SPIKED WITH THE BLOOD OF LEPROSY PATIENTS, TO THEIR UNSUSPECTING FRENCH NEIGHBOURS...
"DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR, CHLORINE GAS ATTACKS LED TO A RACE FOR EVER MORE TOXIC CHEMICALS.
"DIANISIDINE CHLOROSULFATE, DIPHOSGENE AND FINALLY MUSTARD GAS, WHICH BURNED MEN'S SKIN AND DESTROYED THEIR LUNGS.
"AND PERHAPS THE MOST SUBTLE AND MAGNIFICENT BIOWEAPON OF ALL, THE A.I.D.S VIRUS.
CONTAMINATED
"IT STARTED IN MONKEYS WITH A TASTE FOR FLESH.
"IT SPREAD UNCHECKED FOR OVER A CENTURY, WEEDING OUT THE WEAKLINGS AMONGST THE HUMAN RACE. THE DESPERATE, THE IGNORANT AND THE DEPRAVED.
"PEOPLE RESISTED THE IDEA THAT THE VIRUS WAS MAN-MADE, PROCLAIMING NO-ONE WOULD DO SUCH A THING."

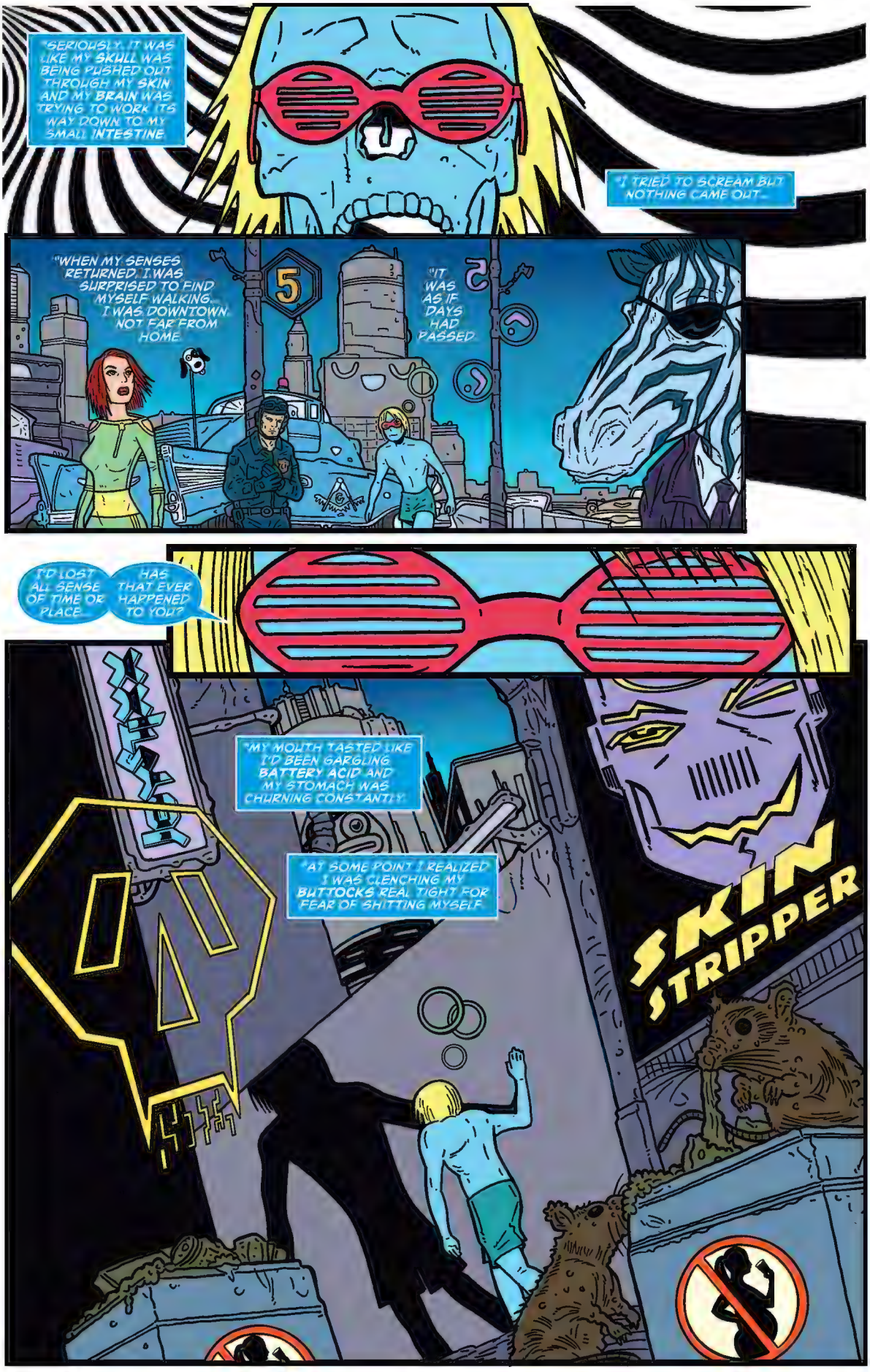

"WHAT THEY SHOULD HAVE ASKED WAS, WHO WOULD DO SUCH A THING — AND WHY?"
哈扎德
"IN LESS THAN A HUNDRED YEARS, THE GLOBAL POPULATION LEAPT FROM FOUR BILLION TO FIVE, SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT, NINE BILLION. COMMODITIES BECAME SCARCER AND SCARCER... WATER, GRAIN, GAS, OIL... MEDICINES."
"TOO MANY MOUTHS TO FEED. TOO MANY THIRSTY PEOPLE. TOO MANY SICK PEOPLE TO CURE."
"MAYBE WHAT THE WORLD REALLY NEEDED WAS A NICE, BIG 'NATURAL' DISASTER?"
"WHILE MAPPO MADE ELEPHANTMEN IN AFRICA, SCIENTISTS ON ANOTHER CONTINENT MADE SOMETHING EVEN MORE DEADLY..."
"LONG AGO, IN VIETNAM, U.S. GENERALS INSISTED, 'TO SAVE THE VILLAGE, YOU HAVE TO DESTROY THE VILLAGE.'"
"WHAT A.I.D.S. FAILED TO DO IN AFRICA IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, THE F.C.N. VIRUS SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVED IN EUROPE IN THE TWENTY-SECOND."
NEARLY THREE BILLION PEOPLE WERE DROPPED FROM GLOBAL STATISTICS IN THE SPACE OF A YEAR...
SUDDENLY RESOURCES WEREN'T QUITE SO SCARCE ANY MORE. THERE WAS EVEN SOME LAND AVAILABLE.
AND OF COURSE, THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS SENT THE ELEPHANTMEN TO TAKE CARE OF ANY SURVIVORS.
MADE SOME PEOPLE THINK THAT THE A.N.C. MUST HAVE CREATED THE INFECTION IN THE FIRST PLACE.
DID YOU EVER WONDER HOW THE F.C.N. PLAGUE GOT STARTED?
NO?
ME EITHER.

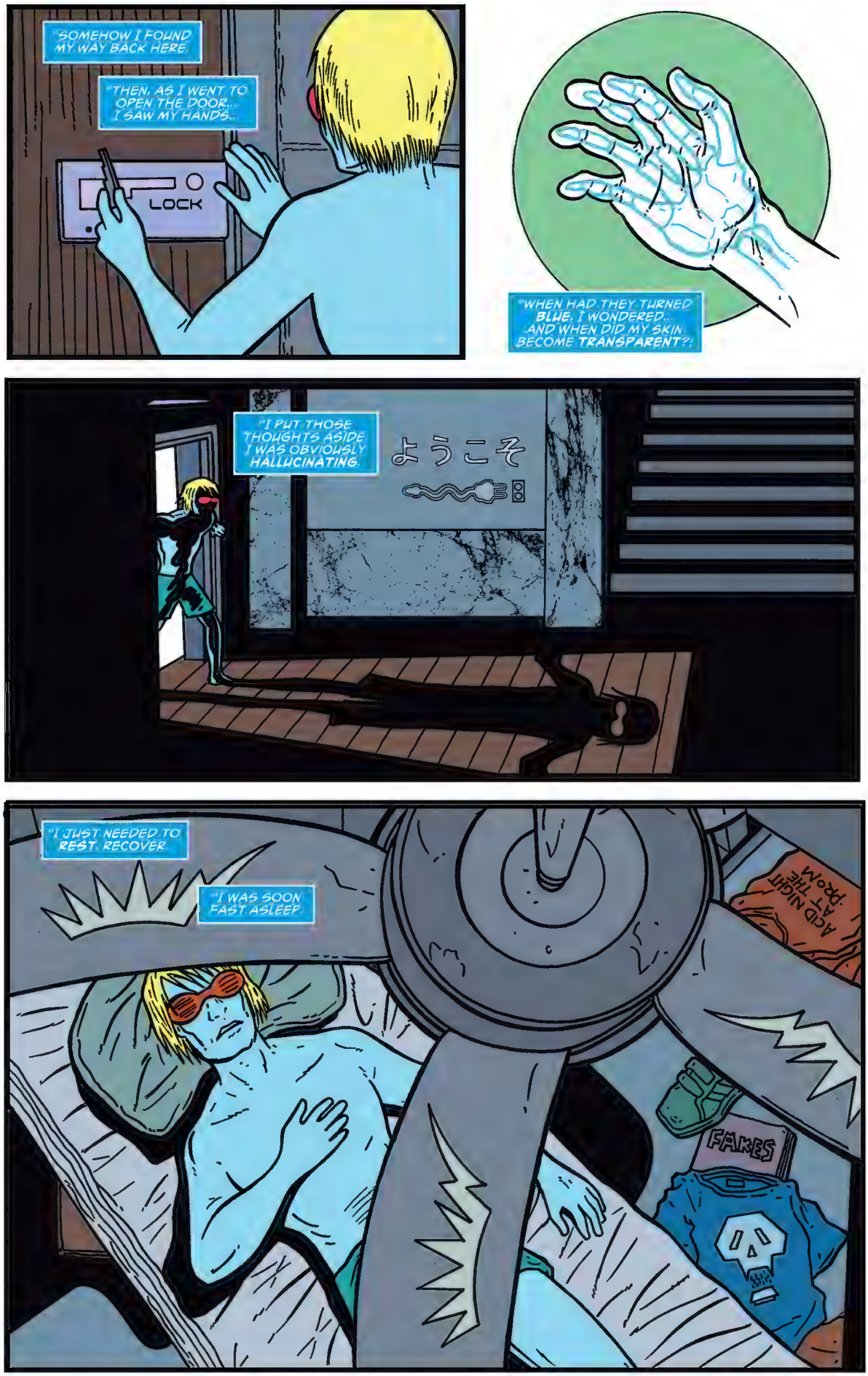

"NOT UNTIL THAT FATEFUL DAY ON THE BEACH IN SANTA MONICA, A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO...
"IT FELT LIKE JUST ANOTHER NORMAL AFTERNOON TAKING IN THE SUN...
"I WAS DOWN THERE WITH MY GIRLFRIEND, TRUDY... A GORGEOUS REDHEAD WITH A SMELL I'D NEVER SMELLED ON A GIRL BEFORE: THE SMELL OF PALE SKIN, FRECKLES AND GINGER...
"AND SHE HAD A FIGURE ON HER. Oh, MAN, EVEN IN OUR ENLIGHTENED AGE...
"IF THOSE OLD FOLK WHO WERE OFFENDED JUST LOOKING AT HER BODY KNEW HALF OF WHAT SHE DID WITH IT...
"WELL, THEIR HEARTS WOULD HAVE POPPED RIGHT THEN AND THERE, AND TRUDY WOULD HAVE SAVED THEM FROM A MUCH WORSE FATE...
"SHE WAS PLAYFUL. I LOVED THAT ABOUT HER. DIDN'T CARE WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THOUGHT...
"FACT IS, HER PLAYFULNESS SAVED MY LIFE...
Y'KNOW, HON, IF ALL YOU'RE GONNA DO IS STARE AT ME ALL DAY...


"...TEASED ME WITH HER TA-TAS..."
TAKE A LONG LOOK, YOU BIG PERVE...
"AND THEN...
IT'S THE LAST THING YOU'LL SEE -- WHILE I GO GET ICE CREAM!
Oh, GEE, HAL, IT MIGHT JUST DRIP RIGHT INTO MY CLEAVAGE!
AND IF THAT DON'T GET YOU HOT, I DON'T KNOW--
WHAT?
"I MUST HAVE BEEN ABANDONED THERE FOR ALMOST AN HOUR... I COULD HEAR ALL KINDS OF STRANGE NOISES... SCREAMS AND GUNSHOTS, HEAVY DUTY VEHICLES DRIVING DOWN TO THE SHORE... THEN, SILENCE...
TRUDY?
"I PANICKED, THE AIR IN THE BUCKET HAD GROWN WARM AND STICKY -- SOMEHOW, I GOT MY ARMS FREE FROM THE SAND...
"AND THERE I WAS, ALONE, THE BEACH COMPLETELY DESERTED..."
WHUPPITA
Huh?

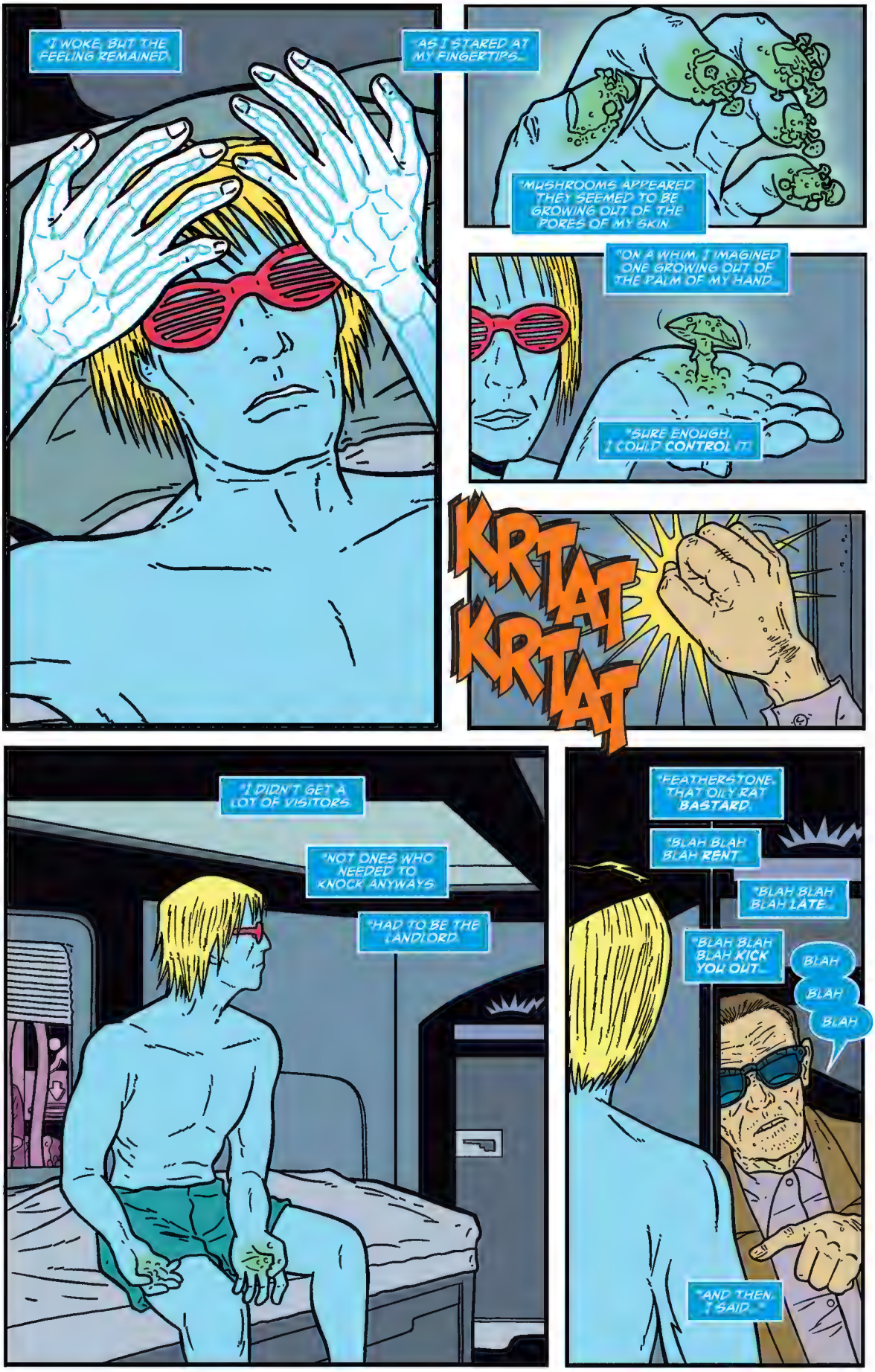
WHUPPITA
WHUPPITA
WHUPPITA
THIS CAN'T END WELL...
WHUPPITA WHUPPITA
FRSHOOOOM
"IT FELT LIKE I'D FALLEN ASLEEP IN A BEACH PARTY SHINDIG AND WOKEN UP IN A NUCLEAR WAR MOVIE...

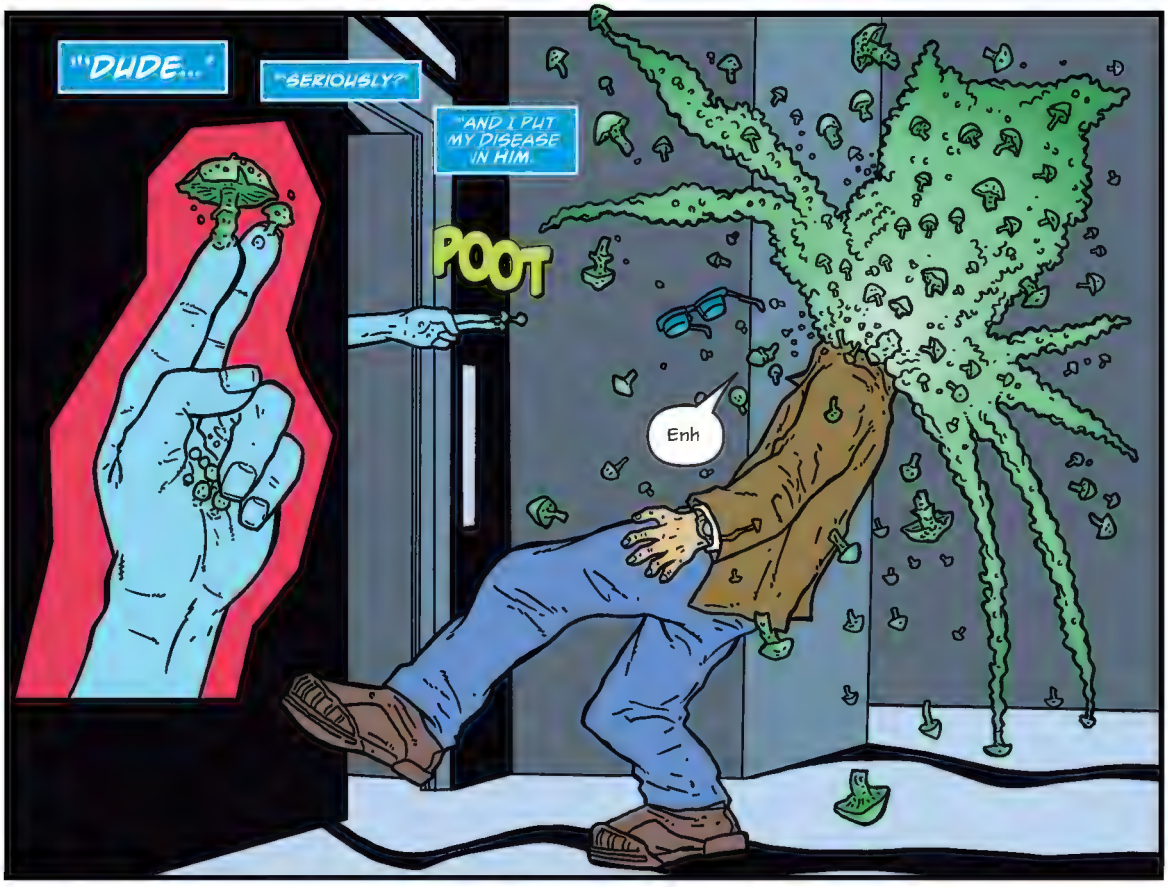
"THEN IT'S LIKE MY HEAD EXPLODED."


"SERIOUSLY, IT WAS LIKE MY SKULL WAS BEING PUSHED OUT THROUGH MY SKIN AND MY BRAIN WAS TRYING TO WORK ITS WAY DOWN TO MY SMALL INTESTINE.
"I TRIED TO SCREAM BUT NOTHING CAME OUT.
"WHEN MY SENSES RETURNED, I WAS SURPRISED TO FIND MYSELF WALKING... I WAS DOWNTOWN, NOT FAR FROM HOME.
"IT WAS AS IF DAYS HAD PASSED.
I'D LOST ALL SENSE OF TIME OR PLACE.
HAS THAT EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?
"MY MOUTH TASTED LIKE I'D BEEN GARGLING BATTERY ACID AND MY STOMACH WAS CHURNING CONSTANTLY.
"AT SOME POINT I REALIZED I WAS CLENCHING MY BUTTOCKS REAL TIGHT FOR FEAR OF SHITTING MYSELF.
SKIN STRIPPER


"SOMEHOW I FOUND MY WAY BACK HERE.
"THEN, AS I WENT TO OPEN THE DOOR... I SAW MY HANDS..
LOCK
"WHEN HAD THEY TURNED BLUE, I WONDERED... AND WHEN DID MY SKIN BECOME TRANSPARENT?!
"I PUT THOSE THOUGHTS ASIDE. I WAS OBVIOUSLY HALLUCINATING.
ようこそ
"I JUST NEEDED TO REST. RECOVER.
"I WAS SOON FAST ASLEEP.
ACID NIGHT AT THE PROM
FAKES

"I DREAMT OF TRUDY...
"TRUDY, MY TRUE LOVE. MY RUDE GIRL.
"MY RED-HEADED WOODPECKER. MY GINGER BISCUIT.
HOW'S IT HANGING, HAL?
DIZZY? SEEING DOUBLE?
WELL, I'VE GOT WHAT YOU WANT...
AND YOU'VE GOT WHAT I WANT...
GIVE IT TO ME, PRETTY BOY.
PUT IT IN ME, SWEET BABY...
GIVE ME WHAT YOU'VE GOT! PUT YOUR DISEASE IN ME!
TRUDY, NO... PLEASE NO. I DON'T WANT...
"OVERCOME WITH PLEASURE, I COULD PROTEST NO MORE. I REACHED FOR HER BREASTS...
"THEN, I SAW...
"SOMETHING WAS PUSHING ITS WAY OUT OF ME...
OHHHHHH!


"I WOKE, BUT THE FEELING REMAINED.
"AS I STARED AT MY FINGERTIPS...
"MUSHROOMS APPEARED. THEY SEEMED TO BE GROWING OUT OF THE PORES OF MY SKIN.
"ON A WHIM, I IMAGINED ONE GROWING OUT OF THE PALM OF MY HAND...
"SURE ENOUGH, I COULD CONTROL IT.
KRTAT KRTAT
"I DIDN'T GET A LOT OF VISITORS.
"NOT ONES WHO NEEDED TO KNOCK, ANYWAYS.
"HAD TO BE THE LANDLORD.
"FEATHERSTONE. THAT OILY RAT BASTARD.
"BLAH BLAH BLAH RENT...
"BLAH BLAH BLAH LATE...
"BLAH BLAH BLAH KICK YOU OUT...
BLAH BLAH BLAH
"AND THEN I SAID..."


"DUDE..."
"SERIOUSLY?"
"AND I PUT MY DISEASE IN HIM."
POOT
Enh

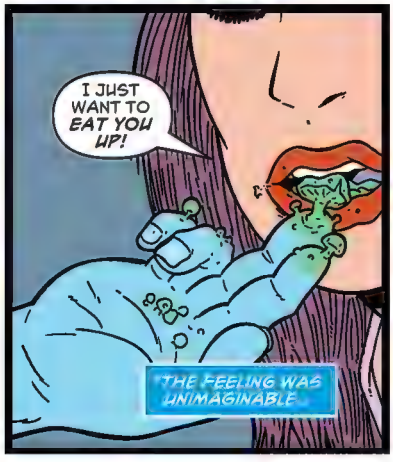
"VANESSA. DOWN THE HALL HAD SEEN EVERYTHING..."

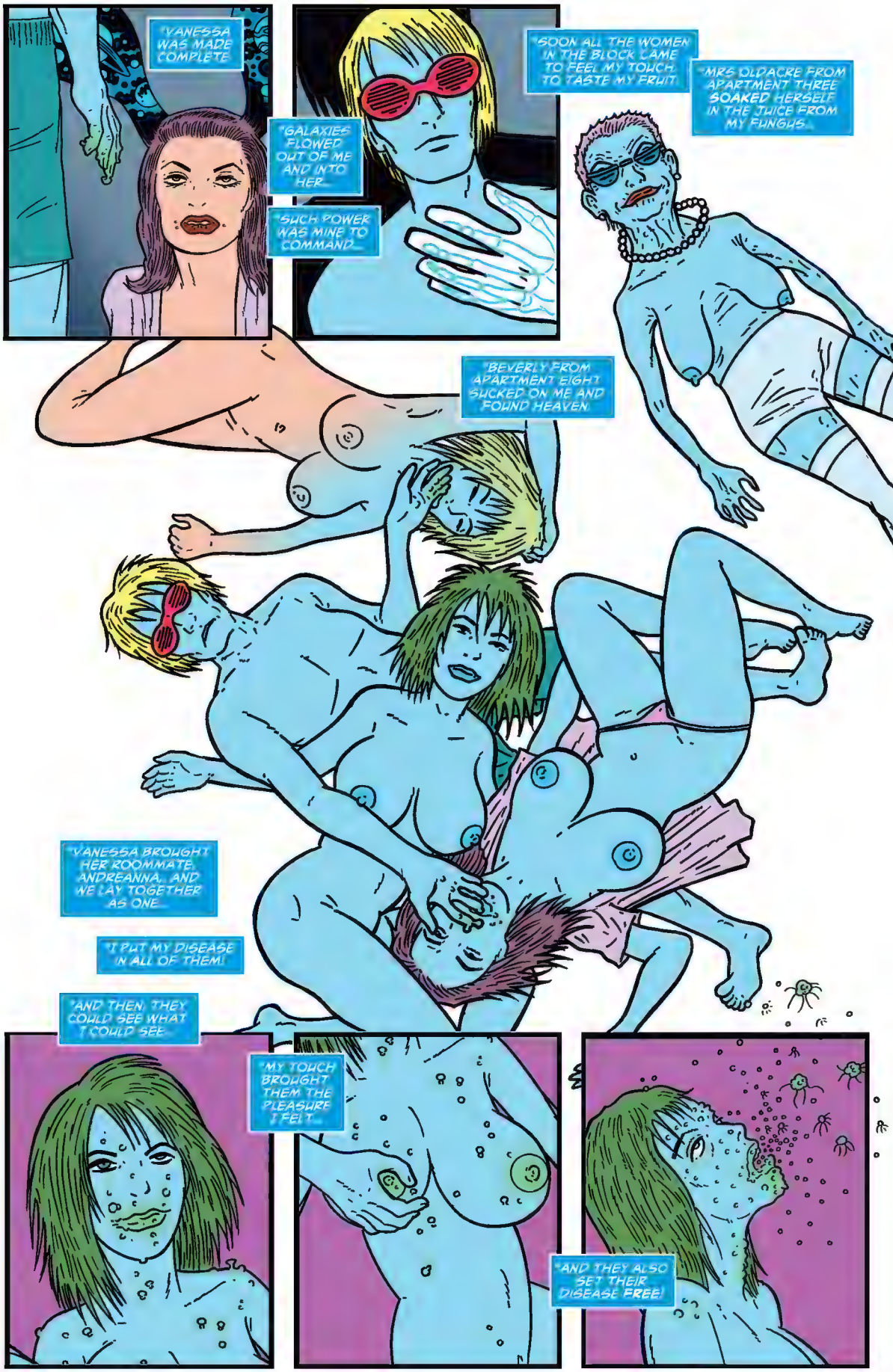
"I PREPARED TO DEAL WITH HER TOO...
"BUT THEN..."

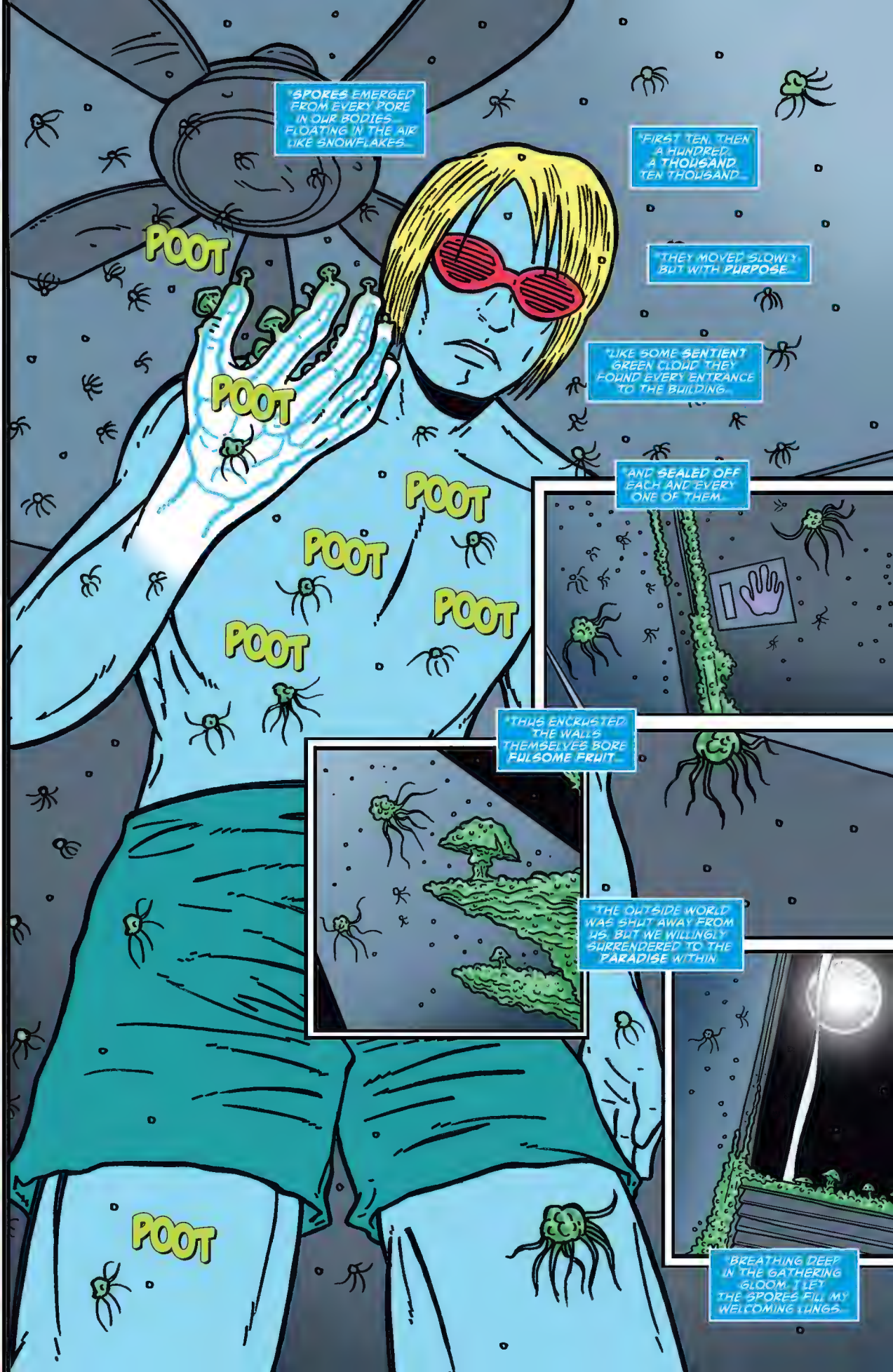
HAL. YOU'RE SO...

SO... PRETTY.

SO FULL OF LIFE...


I JUST WANT TO EAT YOU UP!
"THE FEELING WAS UNIMAGINABLE..."


"VANESSA WAS MADE COMPLETE
"GALAXIES FLOWED OUT OF ME AND INTO HER...
"SUCH POWER WAS MINE TO COMMAND...
"SOON ALL THE WOMEN IN THE BLOCK CAME TO FEEL MY TOUCH, TO TASTE MY FRUIT.
"MRS. OLDACRE FROM APARTMENT THREE SOAKED HERSELF IN THE JUICE FROM MY FUNGUS...
"BEVERLY FROM APARTMENT EIGHT SUCKED ON ME AND FOUND HEAVEN.
"VANESSA BROUGHT HER ROOMMATE, ANDREANNA... AND WE LAY TOGETHER AS ONE...
"I PUT MY DISEASE IN ALL OF THEM!
"AND THEN, THEY COULD SEE WHAT I COULD SEE...
"MY TOUCH BROUGHT THEM THE PLEASURE I FELT...
"AND THEY ALSO SET THEIR DISEASE FREE!

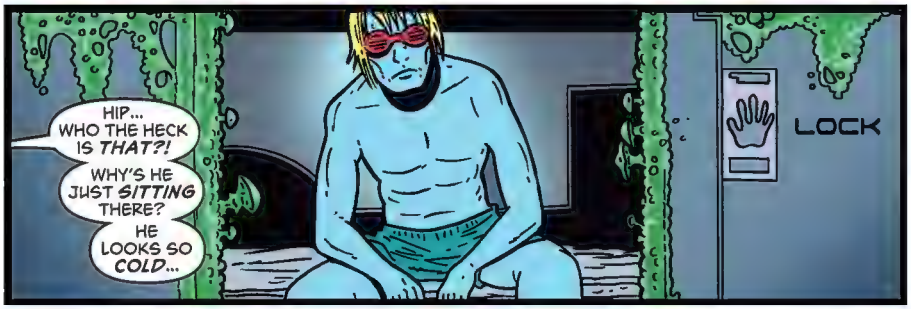

"SPORES EMERGED FROM EVERY PORE IN OUR BODIES... FLOATING IN THE AIR LIKE SNOWFLAKES...
"FIRST TEN. THEN A HUNDRED. A THOUSAND. TEN THOUSAND...
"THEY MOVED SLOWLY, BUT WITH PURPOSE...
"LIKE SOME SENTIENT GREEN CLOUD THEY FOUND EVERY ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING...
"AND SEALED OFF EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM...
"THUS ENCRUSTED, THE WALLS THEMSELVES BORE FULSOME FRUIT...
"THE OUTSIDE WORLD WAS SHUT AWAY FROM US. BUT WE WILLINGLY SURRENDERED TO THE PARADISE WITHIN
"BREATHING DEEP IN THE GATHERING GLOOM, I LET THE SPORES FILL MY WELCOMING LUNGS...
POOT
POOT
POOT
POOT
POOT
POOT

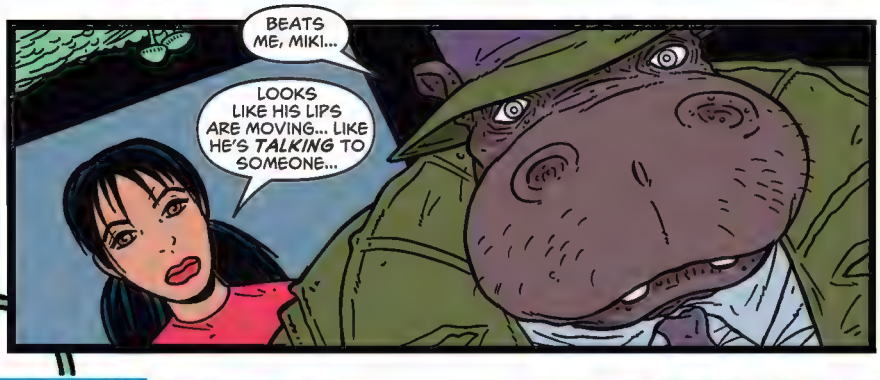
"AND ABSOLUTE POWER WAS MINE!

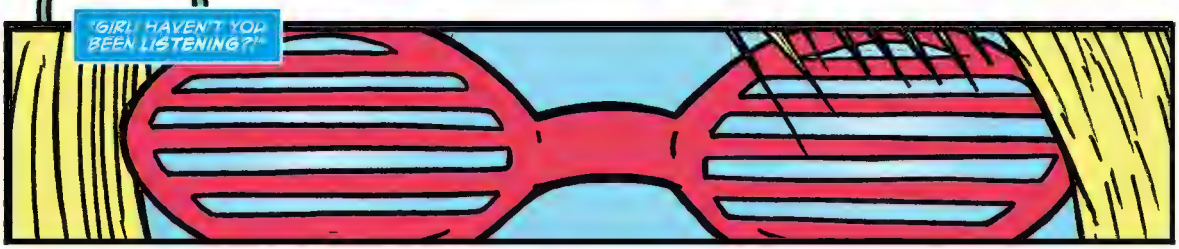
"WOMEN LOVED ME!

"MEN FEARED ME!

"ELEPHANTMEN TREMBLED AS THEY GAZED ON MY FORM


HIP... WHO THE HECK IS *THAT?!*
WHY'S HE JUST *SITTING* THERE?
HE LOOKS SO *COLD*...
LOCK


BEATS ME, MIKI...
LOOKS LIKE HIS LIPS ARE MOVING... LIKE HE'S *TALKING* TO SOMEONE...

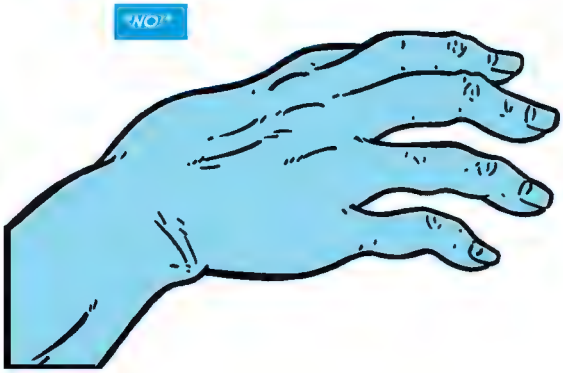

"GIRL, HAVEN'T YOU BEEN *LISTENING?!*"

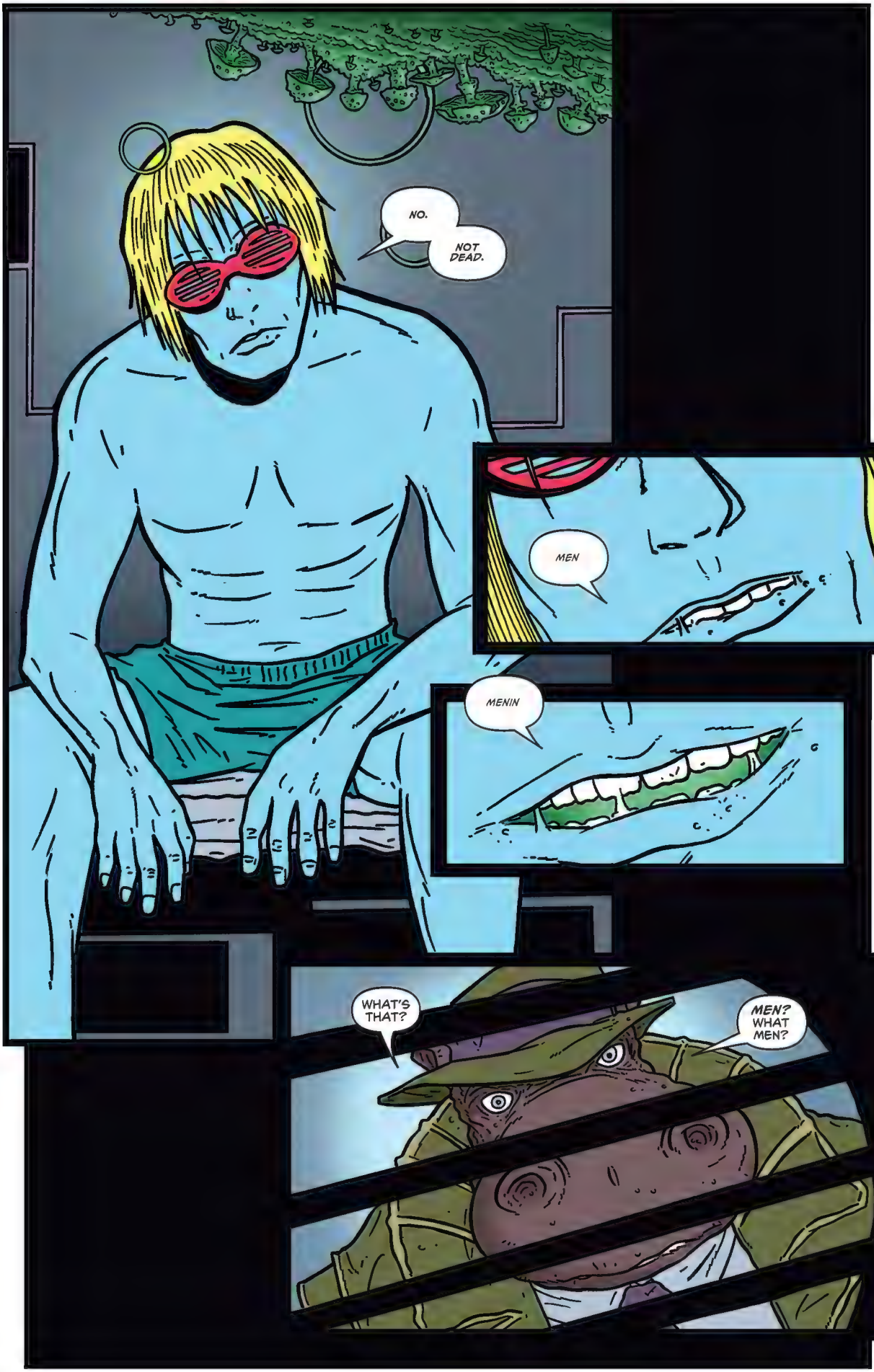
"COME HERE... FEEL ME... LET ME PUT MY DISEASE IN YOU!"
"WAIT! WHAT IS THIS?!"
HOW CAN YOU BE *IMMUNE* TO MY POWERS?!

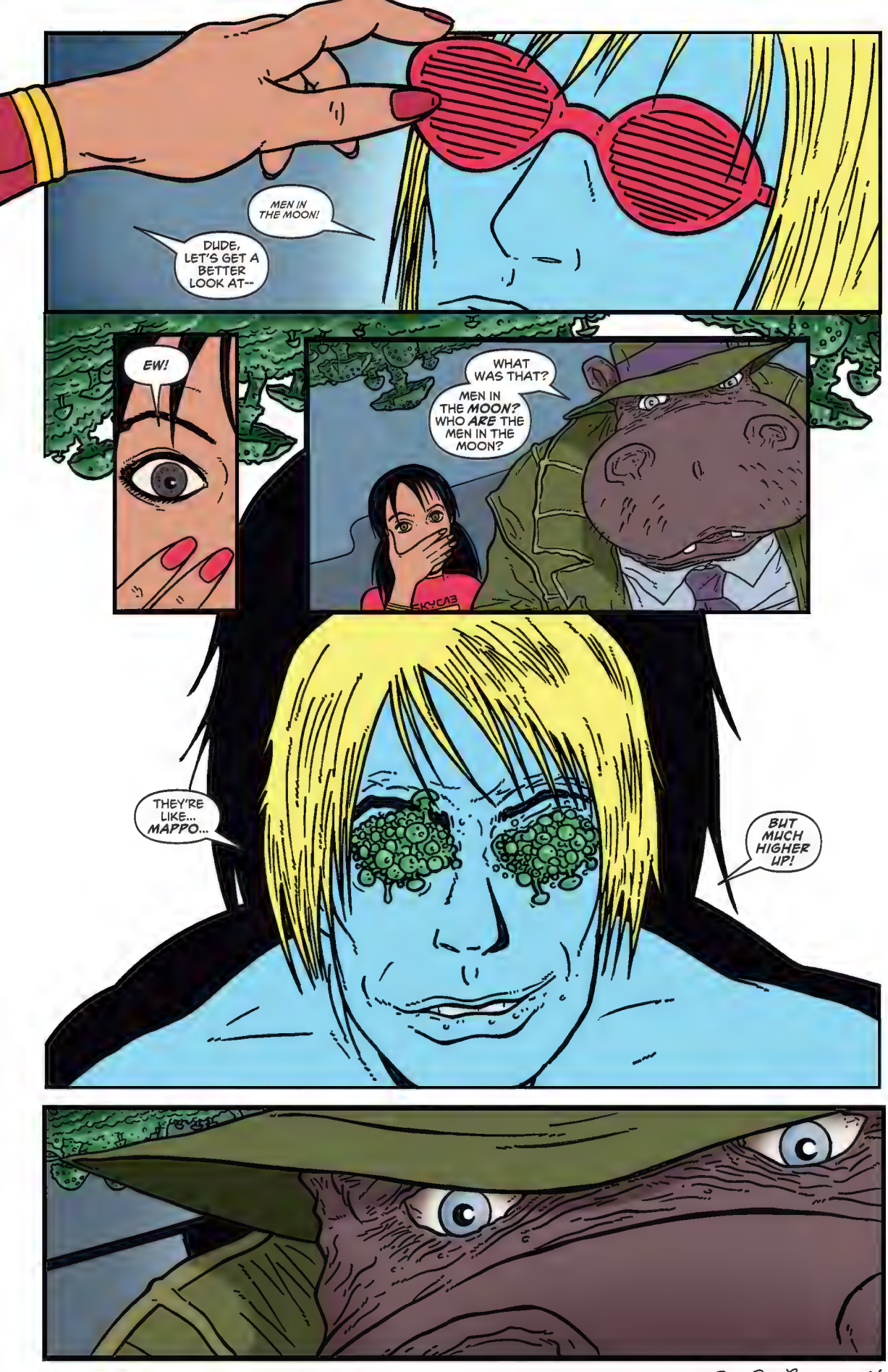
HE'S *CREEPING* ME OUT SITTING STILL LIKE THAT...
YOU THINK HE'S *DEAD*...?

"IS THAT IT...? DID I FALL INTO THAT *DEEPEST* OF SLEEPS?"

"NO!"




NO.
NOT DEAD.
MEN
MENIN
WHAT'S THAT?
MEN? WHAT MEN?



To Be Continued!

"TRUST IN YOUR HEART BUT NEVER FORGET THAT YOU ARE IN THE DESERT. WHEN MEN ARE AT WAR WITH ONE ANOTHER, THE SOUL OF THE WORLD CAN HEAR THE SCREAMS OF THE BATTLE. NO ONE FAILS TO SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES OF EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN."

PAOLO COELHO
THE ALCHEMIST

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BEHIND the SHIFTING CLOUDS

Richard Starkings Words Axel Medellin Pictures

Oh MY...
THE MOON • 2259

LESS THAN FORTY-EIGHT HOURS AGO *HIP FLASK* WAS IN *LOS ANGELES* FIGHTING WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND.*

I'VE GOT A *REAL* BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS...

ONE FREAKY MISSING PERSONS CASE LATER* AND HE'S FAST TRACKED TO THE MOON WITH HIS FELLOW INFORMATION AGENT, *EBONY HIDE*, AND L.A.P.D *LIEUTENANT TRENCH*.

IF TRENCH WASN'T ACTUALLY *WITH* HIM, HIP WOULD BE THINKING THIS WHOLE TRIP WAS ANOTHER *MISDIRECTION* TO KEEP HIM AND EBONY AWAY FROM THE HUNT FOR THE *L.A RIVER KILLER*.*

NEVERTHELESS, NOT EVEN THE ZEBRA IS CAPABLE OF MISAPPROPRIATING GOVERNMENT FUNDING TO *THIS* EXTENT.

MOST LIKELY, THEY WERE CHOSEN FOR THIS LITTLE *EXCURSION* BECAUSE THEY ALREADY HAD CUSTOM-FIT *SPACESUITS*.

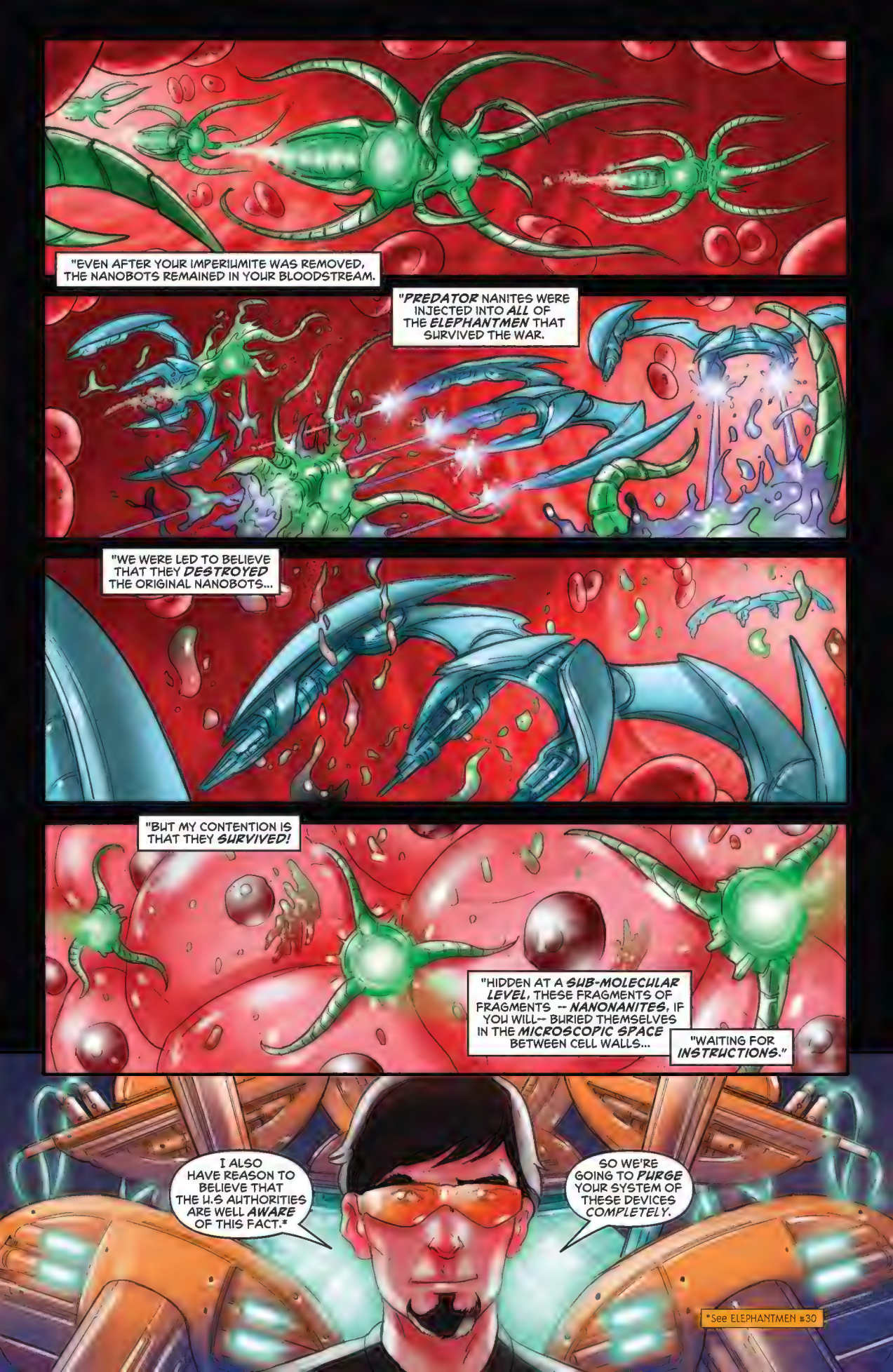
SPACESUITS... AND *BAD DREAMS*.*

SEEMS LIKE IT'S BEEN JUST ONE BAD DREAM AFTER *ANOTHER* LATELY...

*See ELEPHANTMEN #45 *Freaky Missing Person... See ELEPHANTMEN #45 *L.A. River Killer. See ELEPHANTMEN #16, 23, 36-40 *See ELEPHANTMEN #42-44

*See ELEPHANTMEN #21

"BORN OF HUMAN MOTHERS, IN MANY WAYS, MAPPO MADE THE ELEPHANTMEN ALL *TOO HUMAN*...
"HUMAN *GENES* BEGAT HUMAN *NATURE;* MEN INSTINCTIVELY STOP FOR A FALLEN COMRADE... OR TO SPARE A CHILD OR SAVE A LOVED ONE AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS.
"THE FUNCTION OF THE IMPERIUMITE WAS TO *OVERRIDE* THESE NORMAL *HUMAN* REACTIONS.
"IT WAS FIRST TESTED ON HUMAN SOLDIERS, BUT PERFECTED BY *MAPPO* FOR THEIR *TRANSGENIC ARMY.*
"WITH THEM, MAPPO WAS ABLE TO *SUPPRESS COMPASSIONATE* TENDENCIES AND *ACCELERATE* FEELINGS OF *HOSTILITY* OR *AGGRESSION*...
"AND YOU COULD ALWAYS TELL WHEN THE IMPERIUMITE HAD BEEN *ACTIVATED.*


"EVEN AFTER YOUR IMPERIUMITE WAS REMOVED, THE NANOBOTS REMAINED IN YOUR BLOODSTREAM.
"PREDATOR NANITES WERE INJECTED INTO ALL OF THE ELEPHANTMEN THAT SURVIVED THE WAR.
"WE WERE LED TO BELIEVE THAT THEY DESTROYED THE ORIGINAL NANOBOTS...
"BUT MY CONTENTION IS THAT THEY SURVIVED!
"HIDDEN AT A SUB-MOLECULAR LEVEL, THESE FRAGMENTS OF FRAGMENTS -- NANONANITES, IF YOU WILL-- BURIED THEMSELVES IN THE MICROSCOPIC SPACE BETWEEN CELL WALLS...
"WAITING FOR INSTRUCTIONS."
I ALSO HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE U.S AUTHORITIES ARE WELL AWARE OF THIS FACT.*
SO WE'RE GOING TO PURGE YOUR SYSTEM OF THESE DEVICES COMPLETELY.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #30

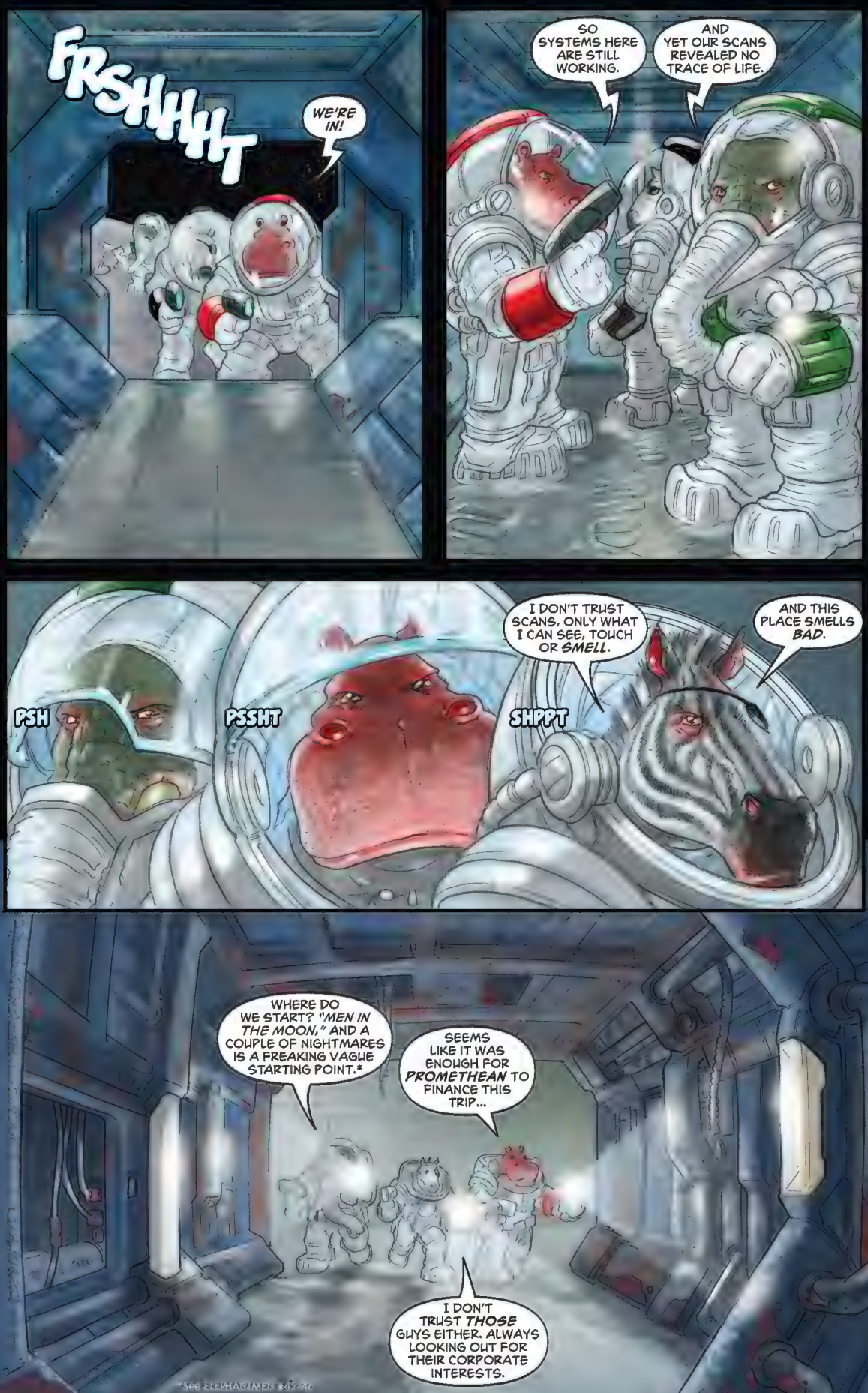
ALTO, I'VE BEEN ANALYZING MISTER HORN'S IMPERIUMITE FROM HIS ARCHIVE. THERE ARE SOME INTERESTING ANOMALIES.
GO AHEAD, LIEN.
THERE'S A SECONDARY PROCESSING UNIT WITH ENCRYPTED DATA SUGGESTING THAT THIS DEVICE WAS ACTIVATED AS RECENTLY AS TEN YEARS AGO.
YOU'RE MISTAKEN.
MISTER HORN'S IMPERIUMITE WAS DEACTIVATED BY THE U.N AFTER THE WAR.
SOME TWENTY YEARS AGO.
YET, HORN'S WASN'T ACTUALLY PHYSICALLY REMOVED UNTIL HE RETURNED FROM MARS, ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU TOLD US, MISTER PURCHASE?
COURTESY OF PROMETHEAN, AS A GESTURE OF THANKS?
ENOUGH.
I HIRED YOU TO DO A JOB, MISTER APOSTROPHE. PROCEED.

OBADIAH, IT WON'T BE PLEASANT.
IT'S A LITTLE LIKE FREEZE-DRYING YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM FOR A FRACTION OF A SECOND.
YOU WILL FEEL IT IN EVERY FIBER OF YOUR BODY.
BUT WHEN IT IS DONE, EVERY LAST VESTIGE OF MAPPO TECHNOLOGY WILL BE CLEANSED FROM MY BODY.
DO IT!
ARRRRRRRHHHHH!
I AM NOT ACCUSTOMED TO SEEING MY EMPLOYER IN PAIN.
HAD HE NOT SUBMITTED HIMSELF TO THIS PROCEDURE VOLUNTARILY, I WOULD KILL YOU NOW.
AS OPPOSED TO LATER, MISTER PURCHASE?

"...ANNDDD...
THE MOJAVE DESERT
CUT!
OKAY, THANKS MUCH, SAHARA, I THINK WE GOT ALL THE SHOTS WE NEED FOR YOUR DESERT BREEZES SUMMER COLLECTION.
THANK YOU, BEN.
UMMMMM
WHO THE HELL IS THIS?
OBADIAH?

MMMMMMM
FSSSST
UH, GUYS, THIS IS A PRIVATE SHOOT... CAN WE, UM, HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY SOMEWHERE?
DON'T BE ALARMED. WE ARE HERE ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS.
MY NAME IS LA MANTIA.
I REPRESENT PROMETHEAN. WE ARE HERE FOR SAHARA.
I'M AFRAID, MADAM, THAT IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT YOU AND YOUR FIANCÉE, OBADIAH HORN...
...WILL NOT BE ABLE TO KEEP YOUR BABY.

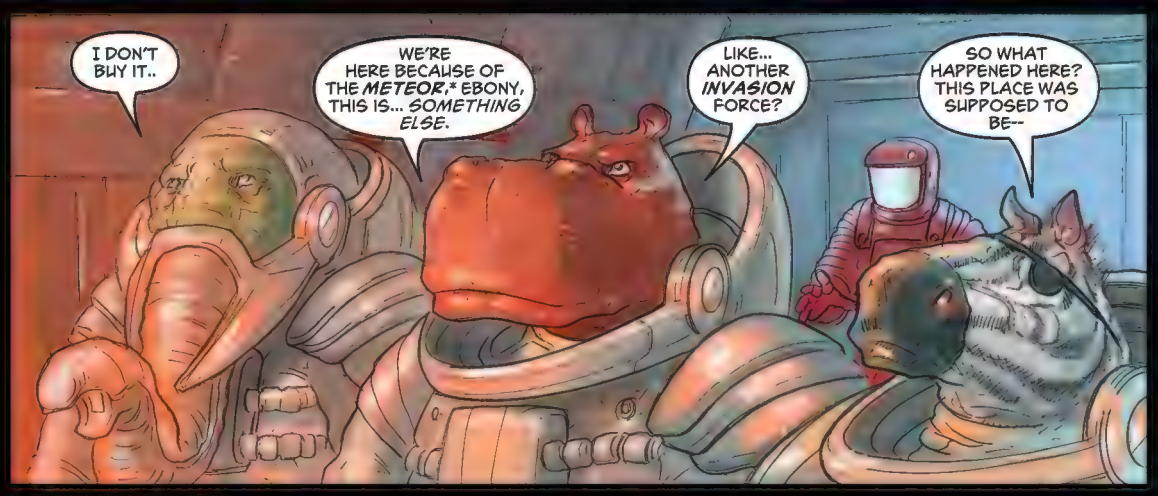
LET'S GO.
MAN, THIS WAS QUITE THE OPERATION THEY HAD UP HERE...



*See ELEPHANTMEN #47-48

*See ELEPHANTMEN #42-46

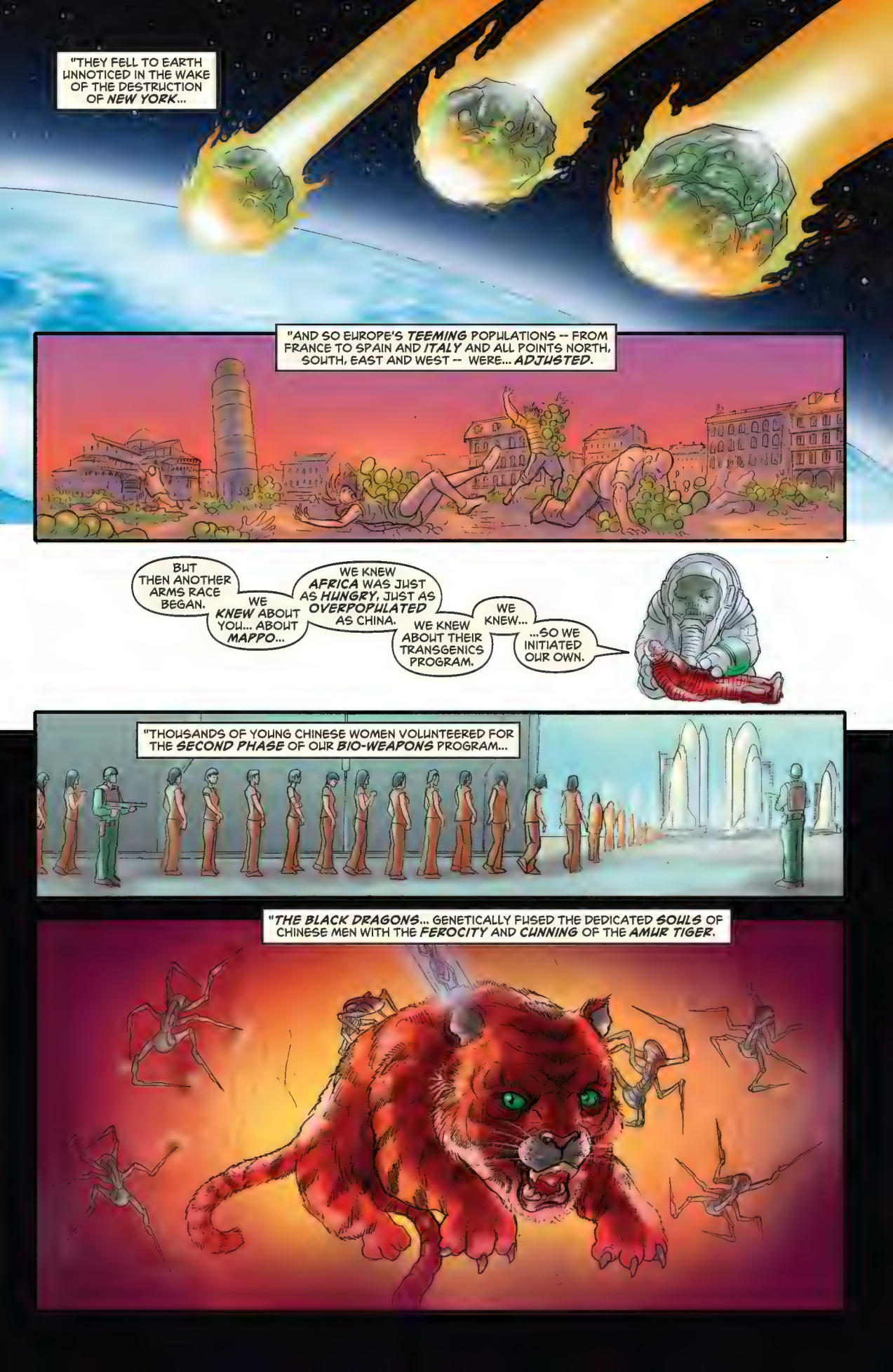
SO... WHAT -- THEY SHIPPED US TO *THE MOON* TO TAKE *INVENTORY* ON CHINA'S TIGER *MAUSOLEUM?*



*See ELEPHANTMEN #13-15 & #46

HOLD ON, MY FRIEND, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN'T MAKE YOU MORE COMFORTABLE HERE...
NO... NO! PLEASE--
NOT GOING TO HURT YOU...
Ahhhh Hhuuh-- Huhhh
WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S THE MATTER? ARE YOU INJURED?
WHO ARE YOU GUYS... WHAT ARE YOU DOING ON THIS MOONBASE?
SO MANY QUESTIONS... OF COURSE.
NOT INJURED, NO... WELL, IT'S OVER NOW ISN'T IT?
AS FOR THIS BASE...
"THIS BASE WAS THE VISION OF THE MEN WHO CLAIMED SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE MOON MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS AGO...
" THOUSANDS OF MY ANCESTORS WERE SHIPPED HERE TO CONSTRUCT A BASE THE AMERICANS WOULD HAVE NEVER DREAMED POSSIBLE... OUR OWN MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX... A PLACE WHERE WE COULD DEVELOP WEAPONS AND TECHNOLOGY FAR FROM THE PRYING EYES OF THE UNITED NATIONS!

Oh... LOOK AT YOU, SO BEAUTIFUL, SO MUCH MORE THAN WE BELIEVED YOU COULD BE. I NEVER SAW AN ELEPHANTMAN UP SO CLOSE BEFORE.
AND FREE NOW...? FREE TO LIVE AS HUMANS LIVE?
I GUESS...
THAT'S ALL ANY HUMAN SOUL CRAVES, ISN'T IT? FREEDOM.
THAT'S ALL MY PEOPLE WANTED...
FOR SO LONG, IN THE WEST, SUCH BIG FAMILIES...
WE WANTED ONLY THAT... WE WANTED OUR CHILDREN TO LIVE.
OF COURSE.
BUT THERE WERE SO MANY MOUTHS TO FEED. NOT ENOUGH LAND TO GROW CROPS... SUCH LIMITED RESOURCES.
FEAR FOR ONE'S CHILDRENS' FUTURE... DESPERATION. GREED...
THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT DRIVE MEN TO WAR...
"OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY WAS TO DEVELOP MUTAGENS THAT WOULD ADDRESS AND ARREST THE HUMAN POPULATION EXPLOSION...
THE INTENT WAS TO MODIFY BACTERIA THAT WOULD RENDER THOSE EXPOSED INFERTILE...
"BUT SOMETHING WENT WRONG... THE BACTERIA MUTATED AND BECAME A HOSTILE VIRUS, GROWING INSIDE EACH TEST SUBJECT, DESTROYING THEM FROM WITHIN.
"THOSE IN POWER IN BEIJING ORDERED THAT THE VIRUS BE RELEASED NEVERTHELESS. IT WAS PACKED INSIDE MOON ROCKS AND CATAPULTED HYDRAULICALLY TOWARDS SELECTED TARGETS ON EARTH.


"THEY FELL TO EARTH UNNOTICED IN THE WAKE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF NEW YORK...
"AND SO EUROPE'S TEEMING POPULATIONS -- FROM FRANCE TO SPAIN AND ITALY AND ALL POINTS NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST -- WERE... ADJUSTED.
BUT THEN ANOTHER ARMS RACE BEGAN.
WE KNEW ABOUT YOU... ABOUT MAPPO...
WE KNEW AFRICA WAS JUST AS HUNGRY, JUST AS OVERPOPULATED AS CHINA.
WE KNEW ABOUT THEIR TRANSGENICS PROGRAM.
WE KNEW...
...SO WE INITIATED OUR OWN.
"THOUSANDS OF YOUNG CHINESE WOMEN VOLUNTEERED FOR THE SECOND PHASE OF OUR BIO-WEAPONS PROGRAM...
"THE BLACK DRAGONS... GENETICALLY FUSED THE DEDICATED SOULS OF CHINESE MEN WITH THE FEROCITY AND CUNNING OF THE AMUR TIGER.

WE RAISED OUR ARMY HERE...
ON THE MOON...
"AND WHEN THEY WERE TRAINED AND READY, WE SUITED THEM UP...
"SENT THEM DOWN TO EARTH...
"AND SO THE WAR BEGAN.
TOO LATE. NO ONE EXPECTED... AGATHE...
SO THE DRAGONS WERE DESTROYED.*
YEARS LATER, OUR LEADERS TURNED THEIR GAZE TO ANOTHER CONTINENT...
TO THE UNITED STATES. THEY WANTED TO USE THE VIRUS AGAIN.*
BUT THERE WAS AN INCIDENT...**
THIS WHOLE BASE--
INFECTED!
PLP
PRP
PCHT
PRP
PLP
PCHK
*See ELEPHANTMEN #39
*See ELEPHANTMEN #13, 14
**See ELEPHANTMEN #15
ANOTHER VICTIM...
EVERY TIME HE STARTED TO BELIEVE THAT HE WAS FREE... THAT THE WAR WAS TRULY OVER AND HE COULD START TO LIVE SOMETHING RESEMBLING A NORMAL LIFE...
...THE COLD WINDS OF SLAUGHTER STOP HIM IN HIS TRACKS.
NO WONDER VANITY IS DISGUSTED BY HIM.*
YEARS AGO, GABBATHA TOLD EBONY THAT HE'D HAVE TO EXPERIENCE ALL LIFE'S SORROWS BEFORE HE COULD BE HAPPY.*
HE NEVER SAID WHEN THOSE SORROWS WOULD STOP.
Huh... SNOW?
HAVE NO FEAR, EBONY...
*See ELEPHANTMEN #45

...WHO KNOWS THIS BETTER THAN YOU AN I...?
A SWORD IS *USELESS* IN THE HANDS OF A *COWARD!*
RED VANYA IS HERE TO FIGHT *DRAGONS* WITH YOU, OLD FRIEND.
"OKAY, THIS I *WASN'T* EXPECTING...

"WHO THE HELL ARE *THESE* MUNTS AND WHAT THE HECK *HAPPENED* TO THEM?!
AND, MAN, I EXPECTED IT TO BE *COLD* UP HERE, BUT... IS IT *SNOWING?!*
YEAH, SEEMS LIKE THE *ATMOSPHERICS* ARE ON THE FRITZ... *CONDENSATION* FREEZING IN THE AIR...
WERE THEY TRYING TO GET INTO THAT *MEAT LOCKER...?*

LET'S SEE -- UHHH WHAT'S INSIDE....
Ah, YOU'RE HERE AT LAST...
THE RELIEF TEAM...
RELIEF TEAM?!
RELIEVING YOU OF WHAT? WHY WERE YOU SENT HERE?
WE GOT HERE A FEW DAYS AGO... RIGGED THE ENTIRE BASE TO BLOW... BUT WE ENCOUNTERED RESISTANCE.
YOU'RE HERE TO COMPLETE THE JOB.
FIGURES. WE'RE NOT HERE BECAUSE OF SOME PREMONITIONS IN OUR DREAMS...
THIS IS A SUICIDE MISSION!
NOT IF THESE GUYS KILL US FIRST...

To Be Continued!

"DO NOT DWELL IN THE PAST,
DO NOT DREAM OF THE FUTURE,
CONCENTRATE THE MIND
ON THE PRESENT MOMENT."

SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

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IT'S THAT DREAM AGAIN.

THERE'S A SWORD IN MY HAND...

...AND I'M SOMEWHERE VERY FAR NORTH WAITING FOR A VERDICT WHICH WILL ABSOLVE ME...

ABSOLUTION.

IS THAT WHAT THIS IS ABOUT?

FORGIVENESS?

LIKE THAT'S *EVER* GONNA HAPPEN...

HAVE NO FEAR of MAD ELEPHANTS

TOO MUCH BLOOD ON MY HANDS...

THEY CALL THESE CREATURES *BLACK DRAGONS*, BUT THEIR BLOOD RUNS *RED* JUST LIKE ORDINARY MORTALS...

IT FEELS *GOOD* TO FIGHT AT YOUR SIDE ONCE AGAIN, *RED VANYA*... I FEARED YOU DIED WHEN WE ENCOUNTERED THE *WIZARD OF THE DARK PEARL* AT BRIGAND'S ROCK...*

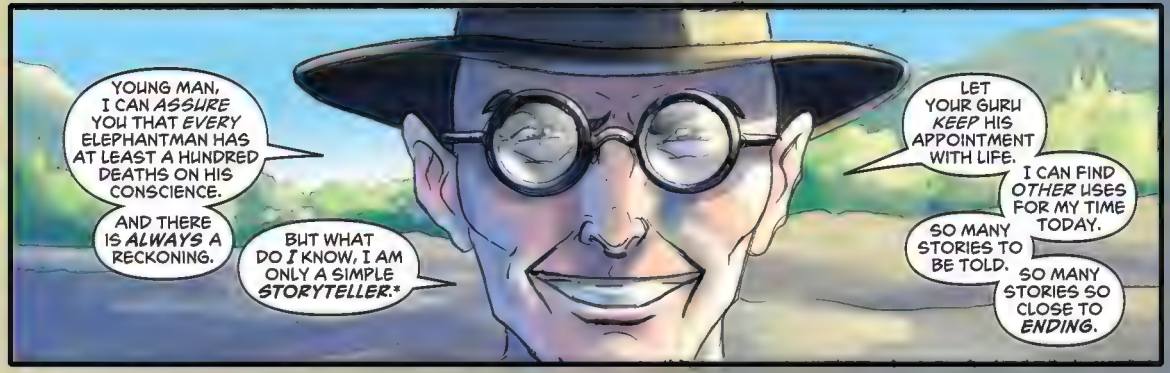
Richard Starkings Words
Axel Medellin Pictures

THE MOON • 2259

*See ELEPHANTMEN #32

YET HERE YOU ARE NOW, ON *THE MOON* OF ALL PLACES... WHAT MYSTIC *ENCHANTMENT* BROUGHT YOU HERE...?
"SPILL THE BLOOD OF A DRAGON, AND THE DEAD *RISE*," BARBARIAN...
YOU *KNOW* THAT... I WOULDN'T HAVE MISSED THIS FOR THE *WORLD*.
NOW, LOOK AT ME, MY *THICK SKINNED* FRIEND... AM I NOT BEAUTIFUL?
AS BEAUTIFUL AS MOONLIGHT ON THE LAKE OF *SORROWS*, MY LOVE...
TOO MUCH BLOOD ON MY HANDS *THEN*... TOO MUCH BLOOD ON MY HANDS *NOW*.
SOMETIMES I CAN'T REMEMBER IF THE WAR IS OVER OR NOT... CAN'T TELL IF I'M *DREAMING* OR AWAKE. I KNOW I'M COLD, I KNOW I'M COVERED IN SNOW. MAYBE IF I DON'T *MOVE*...
MAYBE THEN THE VERDICT WON'T GO AGAINST ME.
AS LONG AS I DON'T MOVE, I STILL HAVE A CHANCE.

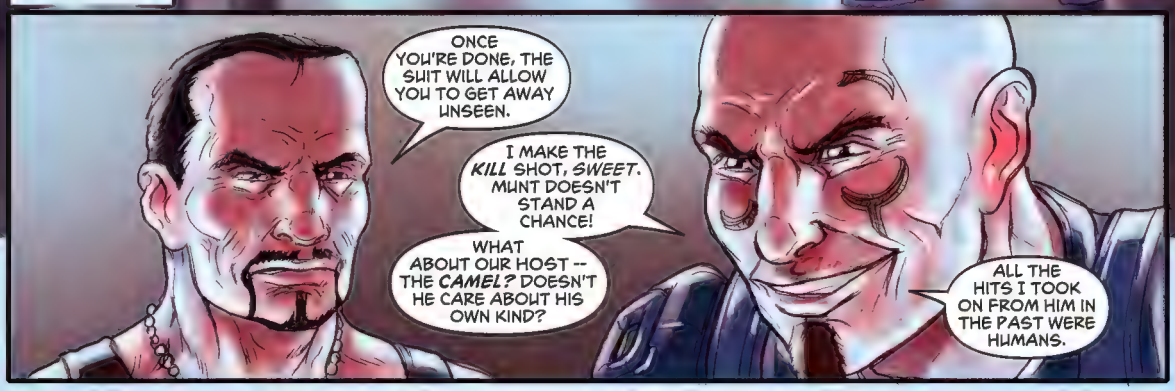
BRENTWOOD • 2259
GABBATHA... FORGIVE ME, THERE IS A GENTLEMAN HERE WHO WANTS TO SEE YOU...
HE SAYS HE'S YOUR BIOGRAPHER.
MY BIOGRAPHER...? MY BIOGRAPHER IS BACK IN INDIA.
I ALWAYS LOVE TO TALK TO WRITERS, BUT AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH LIFE TODAY.
YES.
I WILL SEE HIM ON HIS WAY.

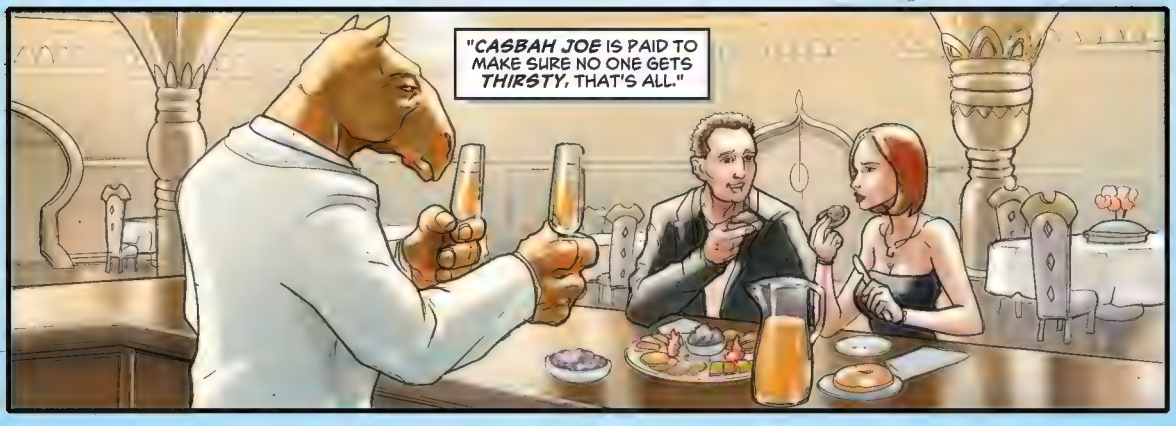


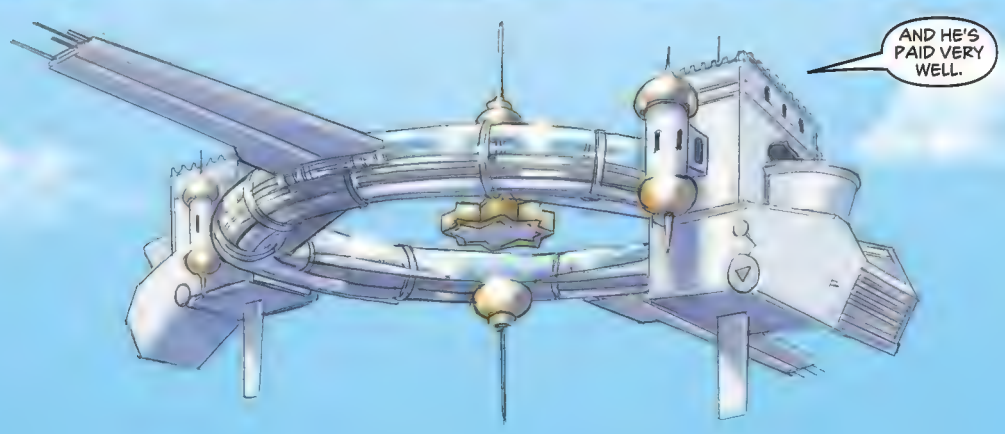
*See ELEPHANTMEN #41

"GABBATHA IS JUST LIKE ANY OTHER ELEPHANTMAN.
"WAKES UP IN A FUNK AFTER A NIGHT OF BAD DREAMS...
"TAKES A PISS.
"PUTS HIS PANTS ON ONE LEG AT A TIME...
"EATS A BOWL OF OATMEAL THAT WOULD MAKE YOU SHIT FOR A WEEK...
" AND I DON'T CARE HOW MANY HUMANS LOVE THAT MUNT...
"BOOM! HE DIES WHEN YOU PUT A BULLET IN HIS HEAD!

YOU WON'T HAVE MUCH TIME, CORDOVA.
THE L.A.P.D WILL POST AT *LEAST* ONE COP BY HIS SIDE...
THE STUDIO HAS BEEN *TWITCHY* EVER SINCE TWO OF THEIR NEWS ANCHORS WERE WIPED OUT IN A COPTER CRASH.*
I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE COPS.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #6

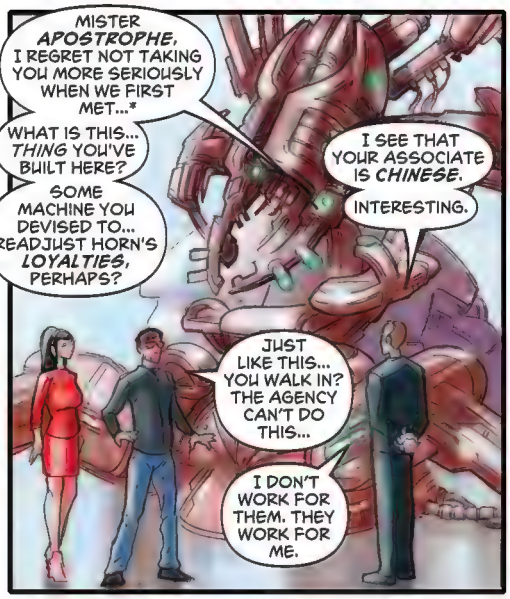

ONCE YOU'RE DONE, THE SUIT WILL ALLOW YOU TO GET AWAY UNSEEN.
I MAKE THE *KILL* SHOT, *SWEET*. MUNT DOESN'T STAND A CHANCE!
WHAT ABOUT OUR HOST -- THE *CAMEL?* DOESN'T HE CARE ABOUT HIS OWN KIND?
ALL THE HITS I TOOK ON FROM HIM IN THE PAST WERE HUMANS.

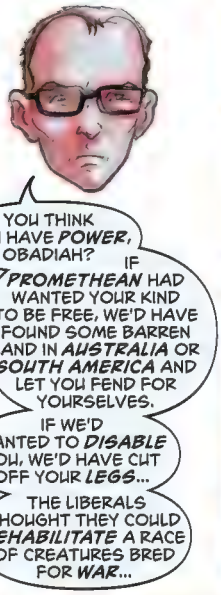

"*CASBAH JOE* IS PAID TO MAKE SURE NO ONE GETS *THIRSTY*, THAT'S ALL."

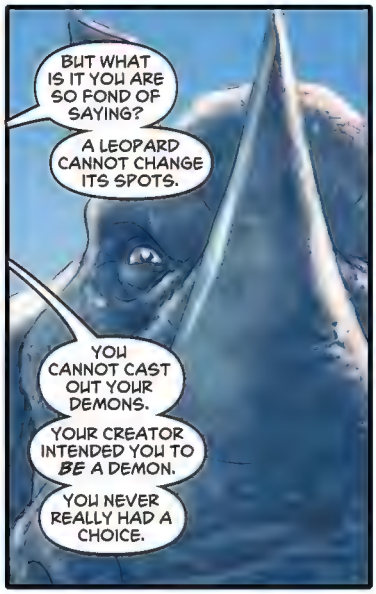

AND HE'S PAID VERY WELL.

I FEEL IT...
IVORY TOWERS

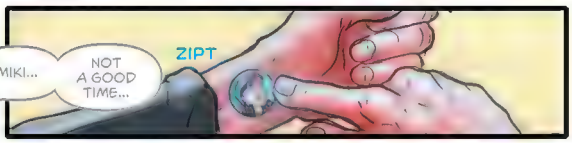
I FEEL CLEANSED...
FREE.
YES. THE PROCESS HAS PURGED YOUR SYSTEM OF ALL REMAINING MAPPO TECH... YOU ARE FREE.

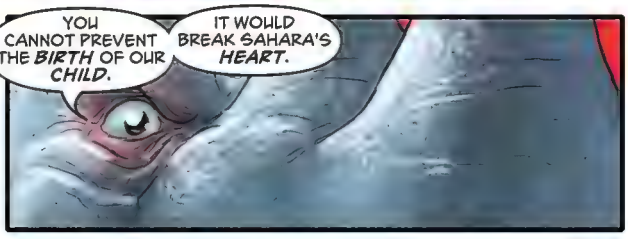






*See ELEPHANTMEN #30



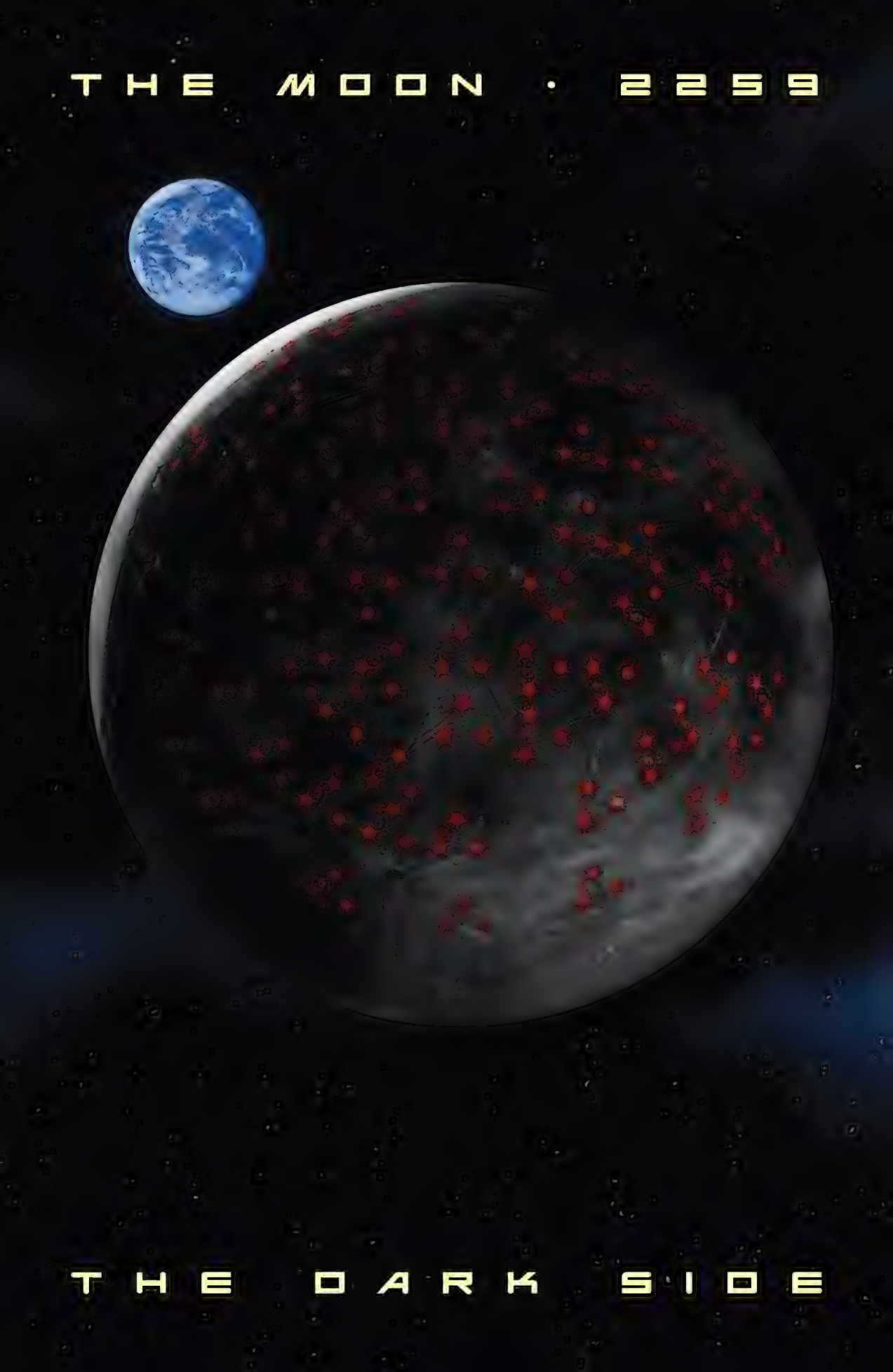


CALL DECLINED
AGAIN?

I'M ONLY USED TO GETTING DECLINED WHEN I'VE USED DAD'S CREDIT CARD A FEW TOO MANY TIMES.

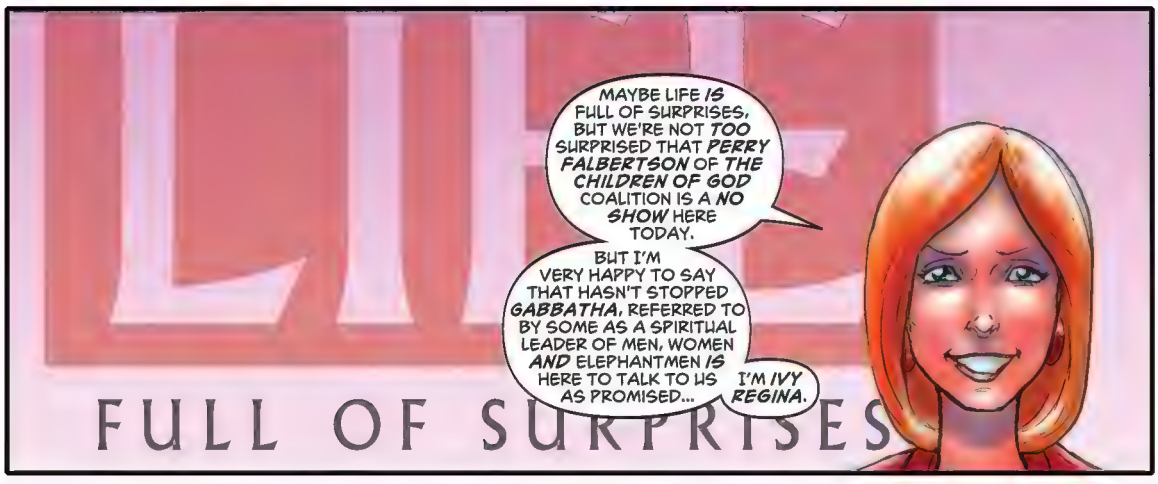
GUESS I'VE ONLY GOT MYSELF TO BLAME.
WHY DO I DO IT? WHY DO I PULL GUYS CLOSE, THEN PUSH THEM AWAY?
OR PICK MEN WHO ARE TOO BUSY FOR ME.

OR END UP A QUARTER OF A MILLION MILES AWAY...
THAT'S A NEW ONE!
NEVER HAD A GUY RUN THAT FAR AWAY BEFORE.
OF COURSE, I WAS NEVER WITH AN ELEPHANTMAN BEFORE...


THE MOON · 2259
THE DARK SIDE

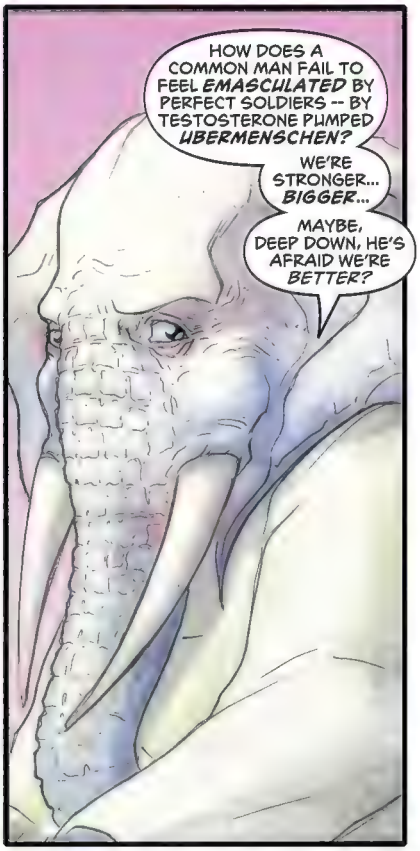
GRAHRAHR!
UNNF
SURE, WHY NOT? LIKE THIS LITTLE EXCURSION ISN'T NUTS ENOUGH ALREADY.
FRZAMM
FRZAMM
WE DIDN'T KICK YOUR ASSES DOWN ON EARTH TO DIE AT YOUR CLAWS UP HERE!

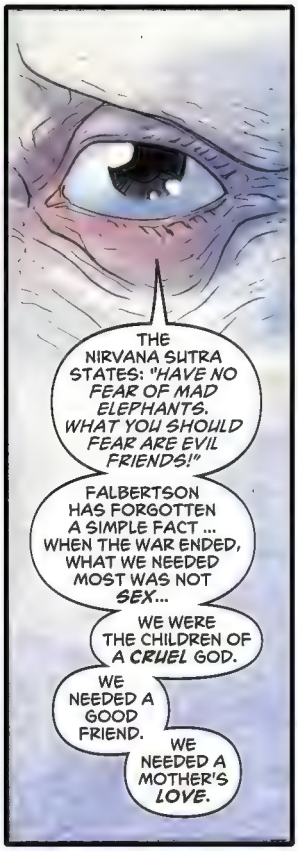
*See ELEPHANTMEN #47

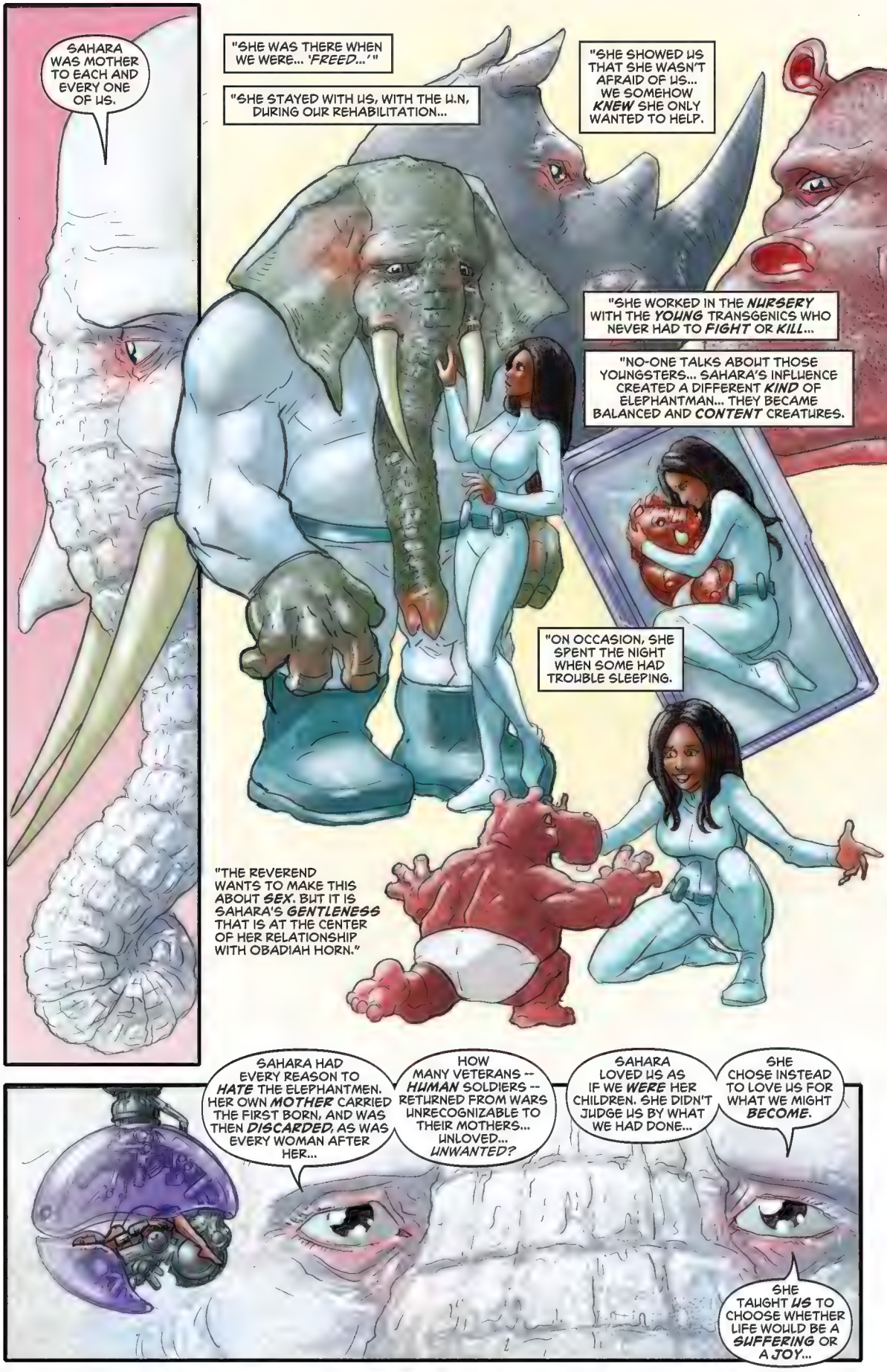

LIFE
FULL OF SURPRISES
MAYBE LIFE IS FULL OF SURPRISES, BUT WE'RE NOT TOO SURPRISED THAT PERRY FALBERTSON OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD COALITION IS A NO SHOW HERE TODAY.
BUT I'M VERY HAPPY TO SAY THAT HASN'T STOPPED GABBATHA, REFERRED TO BY SOME AS A SPIRITUAL LEADER OF MEN, WOMEN AND ELEPHANTMEN IS HERE TO TALK TO US AS PROMISED...
I'M IVY REGINA.

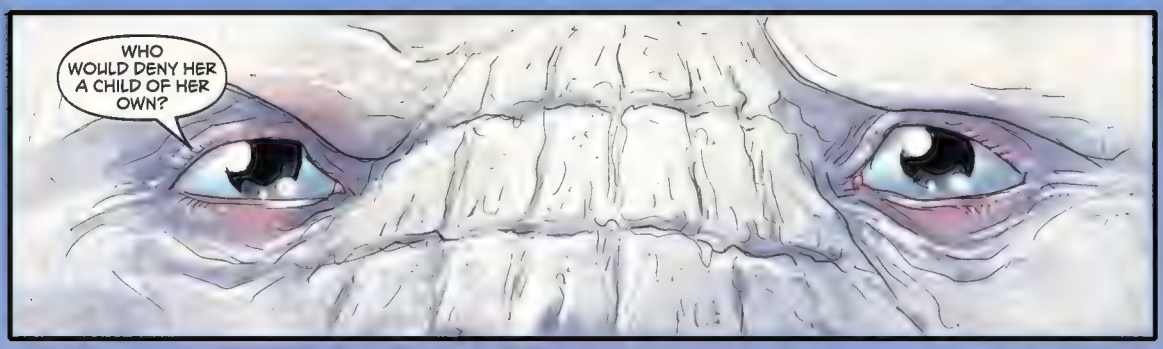
AS YOU KNOW, GABBATHA, REVEREND FALBERTSON HAS BEEN OUTSPOKEN ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OBADIAH HORN AND SAHARA...
"UNLAWFUL," "UNNATURAL," "PERVERSE..."
AND THOSE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE KINDER ADJECTIVES HE'S USED TO DESCRIBE THEIR COUPLING.
NOW THAT SAHARA IS PREGNANT, WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS?
THROUGHOUT HISTORY, IVY, WOMEN MUCH LIKE YOURSELF HAVE FALLEN FOR LOVERS THEY WERE TOLD NOT TO FALL FOR...
ASIANS, WHITE MEN, BLACK MEN, SICK MEN, OLD MEN, THIEVES, KILLERS, CRIPPLES... OTHER WOMEN, SO WHY NOT ELEPHANTmen?
I WONDER HOW FAR BACK IN THE REVEREND'S FAMILY TREE WE'D HAVE TO GO BEFORE WE FOUND A WOMAN OR A MAN OF WHOM FAMILY MEMBERS DISAPPROVED?
A SHEEP STEALER PERHAPS; A COLLEGE DROPOUT OR MAYBE A SOLDIER... OR A PRIEST?

REVEREND FALBERTSON HAS SAID HE WANTS THE ELEPHANTMEN WIPED OUT.
WHY?
BECAUSE WE ARE A THREAT TO HIS SENSE OF SELF, PERHAPS?
TO HIS IDENTITY AS A MAN?
DOES HE FEAR THAT MAN WILL LOSE HIS PLACE AT GOD'S SIDE?

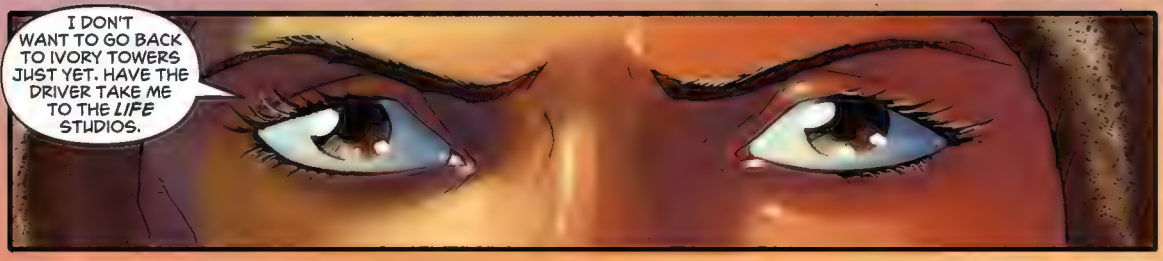

HOW DOES A COMMON MAN FAIL TO FEEL EMASCULATED BY PERFECT SOLDIERS -- BY TESTOSTERONE PUMPED UBERMENSCHEN?
WE'RE STRONGER... BIGGER...
MAYBE, DEEP DOWN, HE'S AFRAID WE'RE BETTER?


THE NIRVANA SUTRA STATES: "HAVE NO FEAR OF MAD ELEPHANTS. WHAT YOU SHOULD FEAR ARE EVIL FRIENDS!"
FALBERTSON HAS FORGOTTEN A SIMPLE FACT ... WHEN THE WAR ENDED, WHAT WE NEEDED MOST WAS NOT SEX...
WE WERE THE CHILDREN OF A CRUEL GOD.
WE NEEDED A GOOD FRIEND.
WE NEEDED A MOTHER'S LOVE.


SAHARA WAS MOTHER TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US.
"SHE WAS THERE WHEN WE WERE... 'FREED...'"
"SHE STAYED WITH US, WITH THE U.N, DURING OUR REHABILITATION...
"SHE SHOWED US THAT SHE WASN'T AFRAID OF US... WE SOMEHOW KNEW SHE ONLY WANTED TO HELP.
"SHE WORKED IN THE NURSERY WITH THE YOUNG TRANSGENICS WHO NEVER HAD TO FIGHT OR KILL...
"NO-ONE TALKS ABOUT THOSE YOUNGSTERS... SAHARA'S INFLUENCE CREATED A DIFFERENT KIND OF ELEPHANTMAN... THEY BECAME BALANCED AND CONTENT CREATURES.
"ON OCCASION, SHE SPENT THE NIGHT WHEN SOME HAD TROUBLE SLEEPING.
"THE REVEREND WANTS TO MAKE THIS ABOUT SEX. BUT IT IS SAHARA'S GENTLENESS THAT IS AT THE CENTER OF HER RELATIONSHIP WITH OBADIAH HORN."
SAHARA HAD EVERY REASON TO HATE THE ELEPHANTMEN. HER OWN MOTHER CARRIED THE FIRST BORN, AND WAS THEN DISCARDED, AS WAS EVERY WOMAN AFTER HER...
HOW MANY VETERANS -- HUMAN SOLDIERS -- RETURNED FROM WARS UNRECOGNIZABLE TO THEIR MOTHERS... UNLOVED... UNWANTED?
SAHARA LOVED US AS IF WE WERE HER CHILDREN. SHE DIDN'T JUDGE US BY WHAT WE HAD DONE...
SHE CHOSE INSTEAD TO LOVE US FOR WHAT WE MIGHT BECOME.
SHE TAUGHT US TO CHOOSE WHETHER LIFE WOULD BE A SUFFERING OR A JOY...


WHO WOULD DENY HER A CHILD OF HER OWN?

THE GOVERNMENT?
RISES
YES, PERHAPS. AN *UNENLIGHTENED* GOVERNMENT.
OF COURSE, GABBATHA, BUT NOT EVERYONE SHARES YOUR HUMANISTIC PHILOSOPHY.

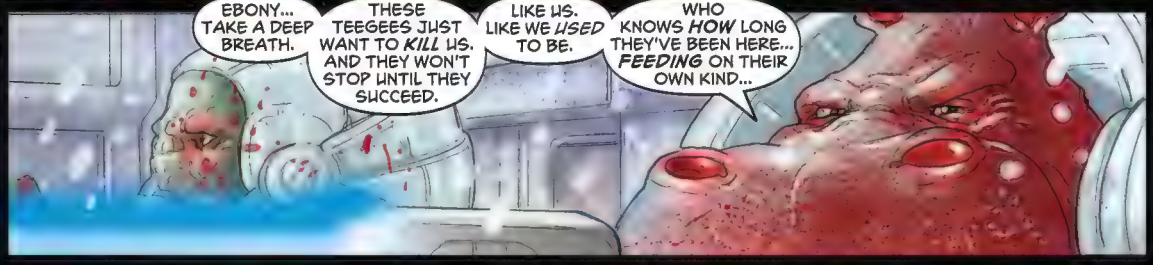

I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK TO IVORY TOWERS JUST YET. HAVE THE DRIVER TAKE ME TO THE *LIFE* STUDIOS.

HARVEST

IS THAT WHAT FRIGHTENS THEM ... A PHILOSOPHY?
IT WOULD FRIGHTEN ME... IF IT MIGHT GET ME KILLED!
YOU'RE RIGHT, MATEUS. LOS ANGELES ISN'T THE PLACE FOR THIS KIND OF STATEMENT...
MAYBE IF HE SAID THIS BACK IN INDIA, WHERE HE'S REVERED.
WHERE ALL ELEPHANTS ARE REVERED FOR THAT MATTER...
MAYBE SAHARA COULD HAVE HER BABY THERE...
BUT EVERYTHING HE'S SAYING IS TRUE, GRU... WITHOUT SAHARA, THE LIVES OF THE ELEPHANTMEN WOULD HAVE BEEN SO MUCH WORSE.
HELL, WITHOUT SAHARA, I'D BE DEAD!*
THIS ISN'T ABOUT SAHARA, VANITY.
IT'S ABOUT FALBERTSON PUSHING ONE THOUGHT INTO THE PUBLIC PSYCHE.
SIN.
DON'T THINK OF AN ELEPHANTMAN HAVING SEX WITH YOUR WIFE.
OR YOUR DAUGHTER.
*See ELEPHANTMEN #29
THIS HAD BETTER PAY OFF, SERENGHETI. ALL I'M SEEING RIGHT NOW IS A POTENTIAL MARTYR.
WE HAVE HIM WHERE WE WANT HIM, REVEREND.
SAHARA IS A WOMAN WITH A GENEROUS HEART, WHO MADE A DECISION TO HELP THOSE THAT MIGHT HAVE HURT HER.
AN ARMY MAKES ALL MEN ONE... SAHARA HELPED EACH OF THE ELEPHANTMEN FIND THEIR OWN IDENTITIES... AS ALL GOOD MOTHERS DO..
IF YOUR GIRL SAHARA WASN'T SUCH A MUNT LOVER, WE WOULDN'T EVEN BE IN THIS SITUATION.
I'M IN POSITION.

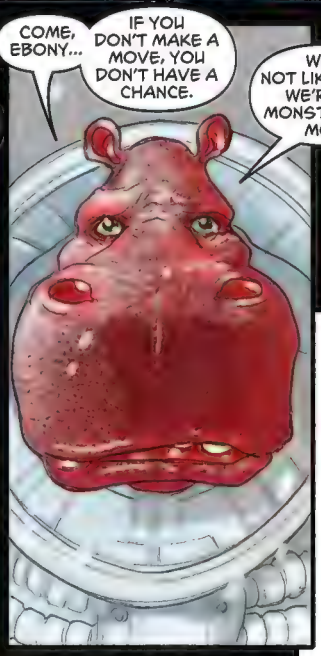
HOW MANY OF THESE THINGS *ARE* THERE?!
TOO MANY!
WE GOTTA GET *OUTTA* HERE...
I'VE GOT HADRIAN... BUT IF EB DOESN'T SNAP OUT OF IT...
YEAH... WE'RE GONNA HAVETA *LEAVE* HIM --

"-- HE'S STILL SEEING RED.
RED VANYA AND *EBONY HIDE!* SLAYING *DRAGONS!*
JUST LIKE OLD TIMES, Eh?
EBONY...


EBONY... TAKE A DEEP BREATH.
THESE TEEGEES JUST WANT TO *KILL* US. AND THEY WON'T STOP UNTIL THEY SUCCEED.
LIKE US. LIKE WE *USED* TO BE.
WHO KNOWS *HOW* LONG THEY'VE BEEN HERE... *FEEDING* ON THEIR OWN KIND...

"STILL *HUNGRY*.
FRZAMM
"IF THEY HAVE *ANY* HUMANITY, IT'S LITTLE MORE THAN A *GLIMMER* OF SENTIENCE NOW...
"WE'RE BETTER THAN THAT.

THIS BATTLE IS WON. MY FRIEND...
BUT THE WAR GOES ON...
LET'S FIND THEIR NEST!

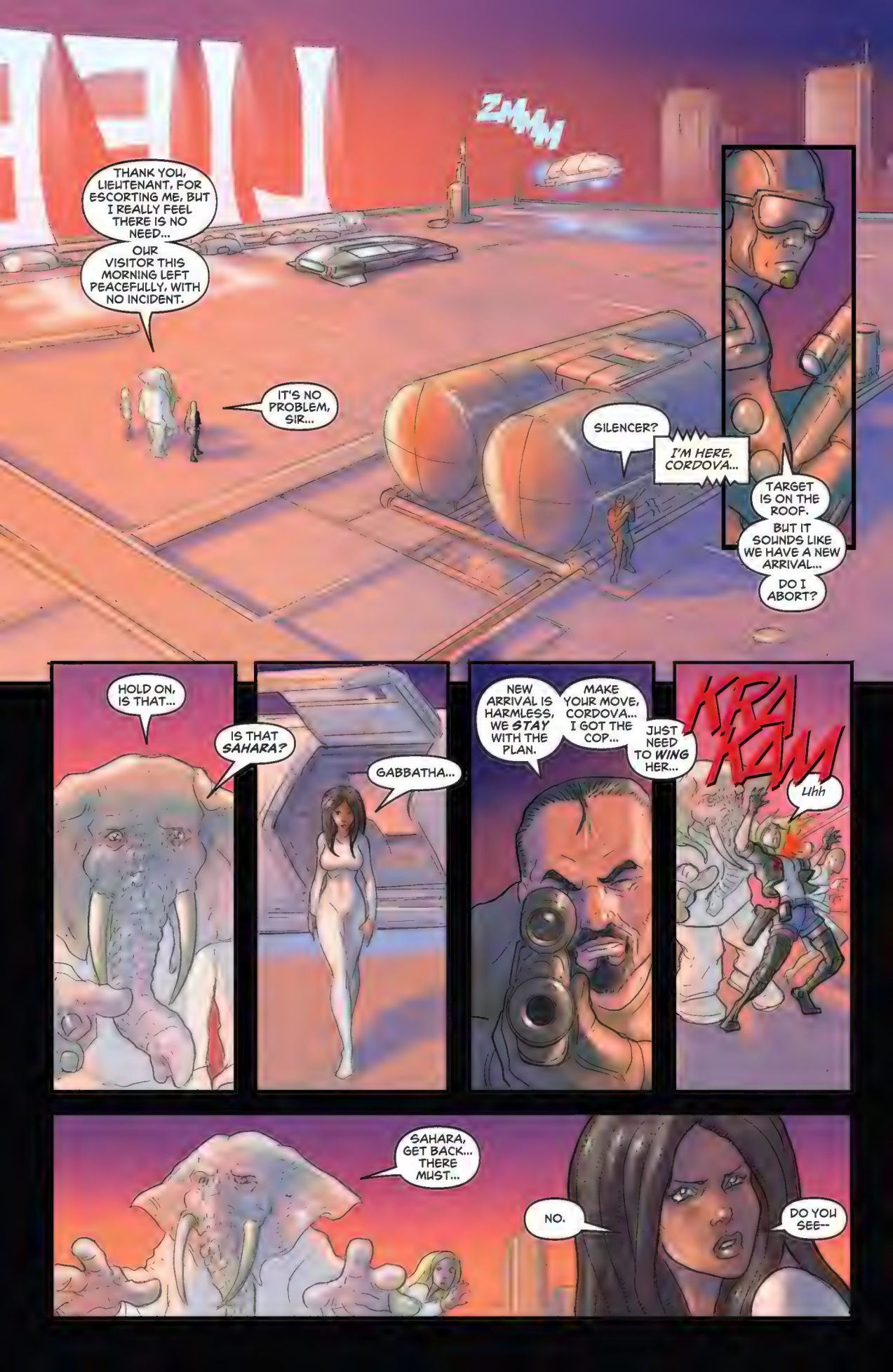

COME, EBONY...
IF YOU DON'T MAKE A MOVE, YOU DON'T HAVE A CHANCE.
WE'RE NOT LIKE THEM... WE'RE NOT MONSTERS ANY MORE.
WE HAVE A *CHOICE*.
YOU HAVE A CHOICE.

YOU BETTER FIGURE THIS OUT... YOU'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME...
WHAT'S THE VERDICT?

OKAY, HADRIAN, YOU ARE COMING WITH US... THOSE CLOWNS AT PROMETHEAN HAVE A LOT TO ANSWER FOR...
NO... I CAME HERE ON A MISSION... I HAVE TO COMPLETE IT...
WE LAID CHARGES...
I CAN TRIGGER THEM FROM HERE...
I'LL GIVE YOU TIME ENOUGH TO GET CLEAR...
WHY, SO YOU CAN DIE IN A BLAZE OF GLORY?
SO THAT THE GREEDY MANIPULATIVE ASSWIPES WHO SENT US UP HERE CAN FEEL THAT THEIR BUSINESS INTERESTS ARE SECURE FOR ANOTHER DECADE?
AREN'T OUR LIVES SUPPOSED TO HAVE VALUE NOW? LET PROMETHEAN FIRE SOME MISSILES AT THIS PLACE IF THEY WANT TO GET RID OF IT.
SHPPT
ONLY THEY WON'T, WILL THEY, TRENCH?
I'M GOING TO STAY HERE SO THAT YOU WON'T HAVE TO FIGHT ANY MORE...
SO THAT THERE CAN'T BE ANOTHER WAR OVER ANOTHER CONTINENT.
SO THERE WON'T BE ANY MORE BLOOD ON MY HANDS...
SO THAT MY SOUL CAN BE AT PEACE...
SO THAT YOUR SOUL CAN BE AT PEACE, TOO...
SO THAT ALL OUR SOULS CAN BE AT PEACE...
OUR SINS ABSOLVED.
A SWORD IS USELESS IN THE HANDS OF A COWARD, RIGHT?

WHAT DID YOU SAY...?
PSSHT
IT'S OKAY.
GO AHEAD...
LIVE...
EB...
DON'T WORRY, MY LOVE...
I'LL STAY... AND IF THERE ARE ANY DRAGONS LEFT HERE...
THEY WILL RUE THE DAY YOU LAST SAW RED!
LET'S MOVE, EBONY.
LET'S GO HOME.

SHTOOM
SAFE JOURNEY, MY FRIENDS...
SHKT
KRTOOM
KRTOOM
KRTOOM
I WONDER... IS THIS THE *END* OF THE WAR, OR THE BEGINNING OF A *NEW* ONE?


ZMMM
THANK YOU, LIEUTENANT, FOR ESCORTING ME, BUT I REALLY FEEL THERE IS NO NEED...
OUR VISITOR THIS MORNING LEFT PEACEFULLY, WITH NO INCIDENT.
IT'S NO PROBLEM, SIR...
SILENCER?
I'M HERE, CORDOVA...
TARGET IS ON THE ROOF.
BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE WE HAVE A NEW ARRIVAL...
DO I ABORT?
HOLD ON, IS THAT...
IS THAT SAHARA?
GABBATHA...
NEW ARRIVAL IS HARMLESS, WE STAY WITH THE PLAN.
MAKE YOUR MOVE, CORDOVA... I GOT THE COP...
JUST NEED TO WING HER...
KRA KAW
Uhh
SAHARA, GET BACK... THERE MUST...
NO.
DO YOU SEE--

WHAT THE HELL?
SUIT'S ON THE FRITZ--
FOCUS, CORDOVA... JUST FINISH YOUR JOB...
...AND I CAN FINISH MINE...
BLAM BLAM BLAM
MA'AM...

To Be Concluded!

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"WE ARE ALL . . . CHILDREN OF THIS UNIVERSE. NOT JUST EARTH, OR MARS, OR THIS SYSTEM, BUT THE WHOLE GRAND FIREWORKS. AND IF WE ARE INTERESTED IN MARS AT ALL, IT IS ONLY BECAUSE WE WONDER OVER OUR PAST AND WORRY TERRIBLY ABOUT OUR POSSIBLE FUTURE."

RAY BRADBURY
MARS AND THE MIND OF MAN

"IT WAS TEN YEARS AGO... ON MARS, JEREMIAH...
"PROMETHEAN SENT US THERE TO INVESTIGATE A CRYSTALLINE MATERIAL THEY CLAIMED COULD BE DEVELOPED INTO A NEW POWER SOURCE..."

LOS ANGELES • 2259

YES, MARS, THAT'S WHEN I KNEW MY DEEPER FEELINGS FOR OBADIAH.

Oh MY! SO FAR AWAY FROM HOME.

HERE.

CELESTIAL BODIES

Richard Starkings
Words
Axel Medellin
Pictures

SLEEPING PARTNERS
CONCLUSION!

TEA! BEST DRINK OF THE DAY!

THANK YOU, JEREMIAH.

CHAMOMILE. CAFFEINE ISN'T GOOD FOR THE BABY, YOU KNOW.

YES, YES I KNOW...

POOR OBADIAH.

...IT WILL BE HARD TO SPEND SO MANY MONTHS AWAY FROM HIM, ESPECIALLY NOW THAT HE BELIEVES THAT WE HAVE LOST THE BABY...

SOMETIMES THE ONLY THING BETWEEN WHERE YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU WANT TO BE IS A LONG ROAD, SAHARA.

...OR A DESERT.

JEREMIAH... IF WE'RE CAUGHT -- IF YOU ARE CAUGHT...

I KNOW THE RISKS. IT WON'T BE THE FIRST TIME MY LIFE HAS BEEN AT STAKE.

AN ELEPHANTMAN'S LIFE IS EVER IN DANGER, SAHARA. AT LEAST IN THIS INSTANCE IT IS FOR A JUST CAUSE.

THANK YOU.

YOU CAN STAY AS LONG AS LIKE, MY DEAR.

NOW, TELL ME ABOUT MARS....

"MARS. IT SEEMS SO LONG AGO NOW, LIKE A *LIFETIME*."

ARES ONE, THIS IS HERA... DO YOU READ ME...?

YES, MOTHER, WE READ YOU.

MARS • 2249

SAMUEL, JAMES, THOMAS... DO YOU HAVE VISUAL?

I HAVE VISUAL.

EBONY IS ONLINE.

FLASK IS ONLINE.

LANDING PARTY READY TO GO...

"PROMETHEAN KNEW VERY WELL THAT SENDING ROBOTS TO MARS WASN'T NEWS.

WAITING ON YOUR MARK, HERA.

"BUT SENDING *ELEPHANTMEN* WAS A STORY TOO BIG FOR THE ETHERNETWORKS *NOT* TO COVER. OBADIAH, HIERONYMOUS AND EBENEZER WERE THE FIRST ON THE SURFACE.

"I GUESS I WAS THERE BECAUSE THEY NEEDED A LITTLE *GLAMOR*, TOO. BUT I *WANTED* TO BE THERE.

PERFECT. PREPARE TO DISEMBARK.

"THE SYNTHETES COULD LOOK AFTER THEMSELVES..."

...BUT I THOUGHT MY ELEPHANTMEN NEEDED A *HUMAN* TOUCH.

THEY CERTAINLY NEEDED *YOU*.

THERE *ARE* HUMANS WE CAN LIVE *WITHOUT*.

"HIDE, FLASK AND TRENCH RETURNED SAFELY FROM THE *MOON* TWO DAYS AGO. THEY ARE IN GOOD HEALTH BUT STILL IN QUARANTINE.*

"THEY HAVE BEEN KEPT APART AND *QUESTIONED* INDEPENDENTLY.

"THE *INFORMATION AGENCY* AND THE *L.A.P.D* ARE AWARE THAT PROMETHEAN HAS THEIR EMPLOYEES IN OUR CARE.

"EACH OF THE ASTRONAUTS WERE ASKED SIMILAR *QUESTIONS.*

"FOR EXAMPLE;

*"WHAT DO YOU **REMEMBER** ABOUT YOUR TRIP?*

*"WHAT WERE THE **WEATHER CONDITIONS** ON THE MOON?*

*"HOW MANY **OTHER** TRANSGENICS DID YOU ENCOUNTER ON THE **CHINESE BASE**?"*

TEHACHAPI • CALIFORNIA • 2259

* CF ELEPHANTMEN #47-48

AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT, THE TEEGEES WERE CAUGHT OFF GUARD BY MANY OF OUR *FOLLOW UP* QUESTIONS.

"*FLASK* WAS GUARDED IN HIS RESPONSES, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT HE EXPERIENCED THE DREAMS HE WAS TAGGED IN.

MIKI'S PERFUME?

HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?

EVEN THOUGH HIS *IMPERIUMITE* WAS REMOVED BY THE AGENCY, IT'S CLEAR THAT THE *MAPPO* NANOTECH EXTANT IN HIS SYSTEM, USED SO EFFECTIVELY ON *MARS*, IS STILL ACTIVE AND CAPABLE OF RECEIVING FALSE MEMORIES, IMPRESSIONS AND DREAMSCAPES.

"LIEUTENANT *TRENCH* WAS NOT REALLY PREDISPOSED TO QUESTIONING. HE HAD QUESTIONS OF HIS OWN. QUESTIONS -- AND *ACCUSATIONS.*

I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT *NEW YORK!* WHY ARE WE IN *ISOLATION?*

DO YOU THINK WE'RE CARRYING THE *VIRUS?*

IS THAT WHY WE WERE SENT UP THERE? AS *PLAGUE DOGS?!*

HIDE WAS CLEARLY *DISORIENTED* BY THE TRIP.

COMMON AFTER BRIEF PERIODS OF SPACE TRAVEL.

"HOWEVER, *HIS* IMPERIUMITE IS STILL IN PLACE, AND IT'S POSSIBLE THERE MAY BE SOME *DEGRADATION* OF THE POWER CELL.

HE ASKED:

IS IT ME, OR IS IT *STILL* SNOWING?

IS THE VERDICT IN YET?

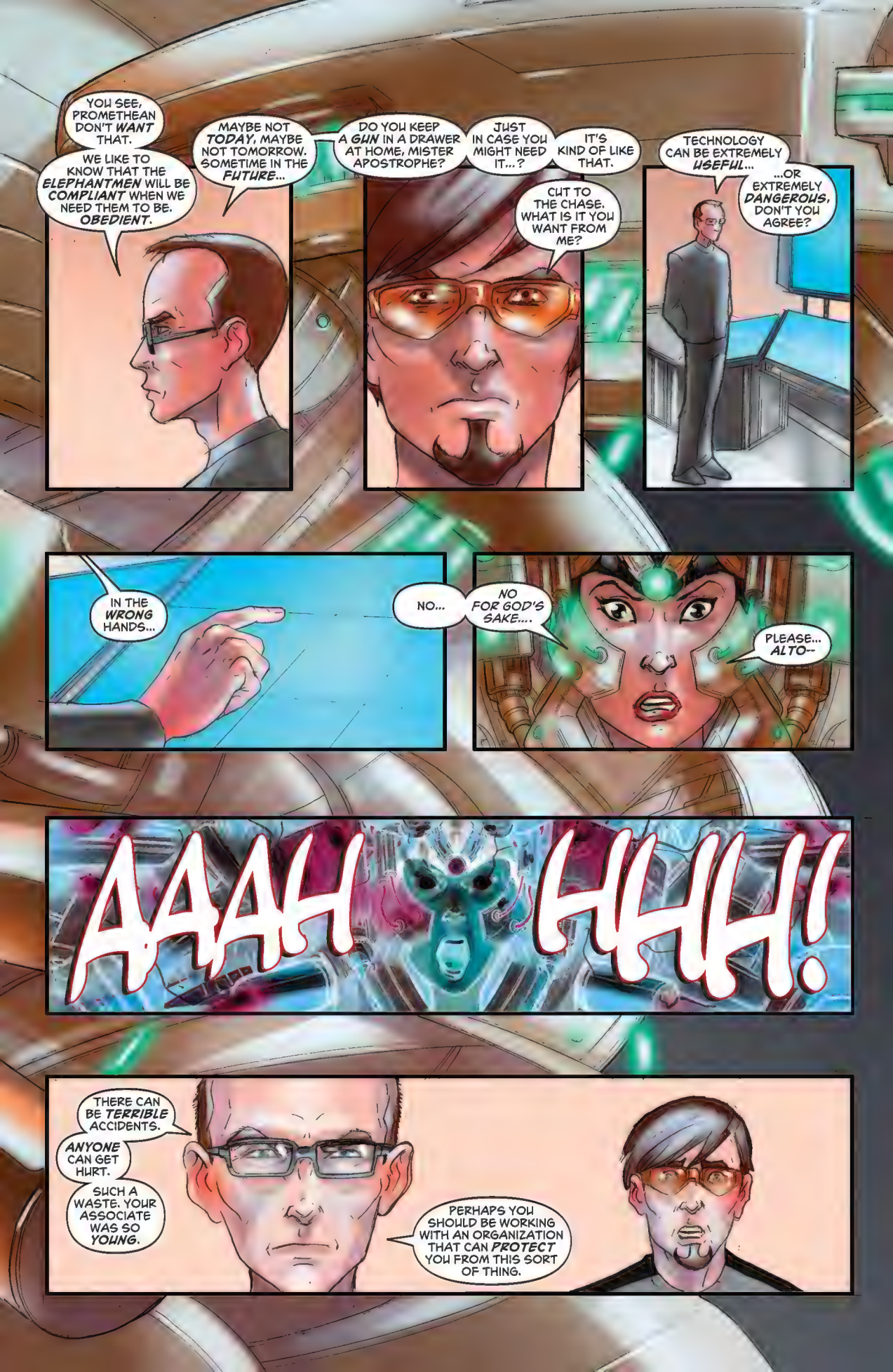
WERE WE--- WERE WE REALLY ON THE MOON?

HMP

HE MAY AS WELL HAVE ASKED IF THEY WERE ON *MARS* BACK IN FORTY-NINE.

WHICH, OF COURSE, THEY WERE, BUT MAYBE NOT THE WAY THEY REMEMBER IT.

IT'S A VERY INTERESTING AND SOPHISTICATED CONTRAPTION YOU HAVE CREATED, MISTER APOSTROPHE.
YOU AND YOUR CHINESE COQUETTE HERE.
PLEASE RELEASE ME, MISTER LA MANTIA JUST TELL US WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW.
THIS MACHINE IS NOT CALIBRATED FOR MY WEIGHT AND MASS...
IT SEEKS TO ELIMINATE ANY LAST VESTIGES OF MAPPO TECHNOLOGY FROM EACH TRANSGENIC'S SYSTEM, AM I RIGHT?
BUT IT WILL KILL LIEN...
HORN WON'T ALLOW THIS... PLEASE, LET HER GO.


YOU SEE, PROMETHEAN DON'T WANT THAT.
WE LIKE TO KNOW THAT THE ELEPHANTMEN WILL BE COMPLIANT WHEN WE NEED THEM TO BE. OBEDIENT.
MAYBE NOT TODAY, MAYBE NOT TOMORROW. SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE...
DO YOU KEEP A GUN IN A DRAWER AT HOME, MISTER APOSTROPHE?
JUST IN CASE YOU MIGHT NEED IT...?
IT'S KIND OF LIKE THAT.
CUT TO THE CHASE. WHAT IS IT YOU WANT FROM ME?
TECHNOLOGY CAN BE EXTREMELY USEFUL...
...OR EXTREMELY DANGEROUS, DON'T YOU AGREE?
IN THE WRONG HANDS...
NO...
NO FOR GOD'S SAKE....
PLEASE... ALTO--
AAAH HHH!
THERE CAN BE TERRIBLE ACCIDENTS.
ANYONE CAN GET HURT.
SUCH A WASTE. YOUR ASSOCIATE WAS SO YOUNG.
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD BE WORKING WITH AN ORGANIZATION THAT CAN PROTECT YOU FROM THIS SORT OF THING.

HORN, HIP AND EBONY HAD BARELY BEEN ON THE MARS SURFACE AN **HOUR** BEFORE THEY FOUND THE **CRYSTALS**.

ARES ONE TO HERA-- DO YOU SEE THIS?

I'M SEEING IT, I'M JUST NOT SURE I'M **BELIEVING** IT...

ARES TWO, PLEASE REPEAT, YOUR SIGNAL IS BREAKING UP...

ARES TWO, THIS IS HERA... DO YOU READ ME...?

IT'S... BEAUTIFUL...

ARES THREE, I HAVE YOU ON **AUDIO** BUT YOUR VIDEO IS **DEAD**.

OH MY LORD... WHAT IS **THAT**?!

ARES--?

OBADIAH! **WATCH OUT!**

SA-- WE-- --ING-- AC--KT

TH-- SN-- KT-- CR--ULL-- CO-- NG--V--UH!

OBADIAH, PLEASE RESPOND... *HIERONYMOUS*... HIP?!

SAMUEL... I'VE LOST CONTACT WITH THE LANDING PARTY...

SAMUEL...?

BY THE DESERT WINDS, SAMUEL--?

SAMUEL IS OTHERWISE OCCUPIED, MA'AM.

WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO RECOVER CONTACT WITH THE TRANSGENICS...

THE LANDING PARTY IS, OF COURSE, OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE.

PROMETHEAN CONTROL, THIS IS SAMUEL. *OPERATION DEMETER* HAS BEEN INITIATED.

MARS PROBE ONE HAS DESPATCHED THE TRANSGENICS TO INVESTIGATE THE CRYSTALS.

SYNTHETES ARE PROCEEDING TO THE PROMETHEAN CONSTRUCTION SITE AS PLANNED.

WE HEARD ONLY SNATCHES OF THEIR TRANSMISSIONS FOR THE NEXT FIFTEEN MINUTES.

ONLY WHEN THEY WERE BROUGHT BACK TO THE SHIP DID WE FIND OUT WHAT IT WAS THEY ENCOUNTERED THERE...

ARES ONE, RESPOND...

ARES TWO?

ARES THREE, PLEASE REPEAT YOUR LAST TRANSMISSION

ARE YOU RECEIVING ME?

OBADIAH?

PLEASE REPEAT.

BY THE SEVEN SANDS...

I'VE LOST THEM...

OBADIAH...

MEMORY IMPLANTATION IS NOW IN PROGRESS.

THE ATTACK IS PROCEEDING.

THE TRANSGENICS ARE ENGAGED.

SAHARA, COMPLETELY DIVERTED.

EBONY?

HELLO?

HELLO?

IT WAS STRANGE... LIKE THEIR MISSION WAS OVER BEFORE IT BEGAN...

WHAT THE HELL?! A FUEL SOURCE WITH TEETH?!

I THOUGHT WE WERE HERE TO **HARVEST** THESE CRYSTALS, NOT FEED THEM!

FRZAM

KRAKT

GET UP.

FRZAM

KRAKT

BACK TO THE SHIP! HURRY!

WE HAVE THIS COVERED. HERA, ARES IS RETURNING.

OBADIAH!

SAHARA.

I WAS SO WORRIED...

DON'T BE, SAHARA. WE'RE ***SAFE***. ***YOU'RE*** SAFE.

AS LONG AS I AM ALIVE, YOU ALWAYS WILL BE. I WILL MAKE SURE OF IT.

THAT WAS THE ***MOMENT***, JEREMIAH... THAT WAS WHEN I REALIZED I HAD FALLEN IN LOVE WITH OBADIAH.

WHEN HE ***TOLD*** ME I WAS SAFE, I ***FELT*** SAFE.

HE MADE A PROMISE AND I BELIEVED HIM.

AND I MADE A PROMISE TO HIM, AND I'VE TRICKED HIM...

"TRICKED HIM INTO BELIEVING I'M STILL AT HIS SIDE... IT'S SO DANGEROUS, JEREMIAH... HIS WHOLE WORLD COULD COME CRASHING DOWN...

THE CARDS ARE NEVER **WRONG.**

THE TOWER

OVERS

THE **TOWER** AND THE **LOVERS.** TO PANYA THEY ONLY EVER MEANT ONLY **ONE** THING...

SAHARA HAS TAUGHT **PANYA** TO **ACT** LIKE HER, **TALK** LIKE HER, **THINK** LIKE HER. TO **PROTECT** SAHARA -- EVEN FROM HER OWN LOVER, **OBADIAH HORN**... AND NOW SHE HAS TAKEN SAHARA'S PLACE COMPLETELY, IN HER BED...

AT HIS SIDE.

SAHARA HAD EVEN ASKED HER TO CARRY A **CHILD** FOR HER... **HIS** CHILD...

IT DOESN'T MATTER TO HER THAT THEY TOOK THE BABY...

IN MANY WAYS IT WAS A RELIEF.

SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT **THING** GROWING INSIDE HER ANY MORE.

NO MORE **NIGHTMARES** ABOUT SOME CRAZY HALF-HUMAN HALF-ELEPHANTMAN **CLAWING** ITS WAY **OUT** OF HER...

THE STAR

GABBATHA HAD TOLD HER THAT LIFE ISN'T CHAOTIC. THAT THE UNIVERSE WAS PUTTING HER EXACTLY WHERE SHE NEEDED TO BE.

AT HIS SIDE, TO SAVE HIM...* AT HORN'S SIDE TO COMFORT HIM.

BUT GABBATHA BELIEVES HER TO BE SAHARA, SO MAYBE HIS UNIVERSE IS REALLY MORE CHAOTIC THAN HE THINKS IT IS.

ALL SHE HAS TO DO NOW IS CONVINCE **HORN** THAT SHE IS SAHARA.

NOT FOR AN **HOUR**, OR AN AFTERNOON... OR A **NIGHT**... BUT FOR MONTHS.

BUT HE'S JUST A MAN. NOT A MONSTER. SHE FIGURED THAT OUT ALREADY.

LOOK AT HOW SOUNDLY HE SLEEPS RIGHT NOW... TOTALLY **SATISFIED.**

PANYA USED TO LIVE IN AWE OF SAHARA AND THE LIFE SHE LIVED IN HORN'S **IVORY TOWERS**...

NOW THAT LIFE IS HERS.

NO MORE DIRT AND GRIME UNDER HER FEET -- OR HER FINGERNAILS...

NO **DAMASK ROSE** IN HER HAIR EITHER...

BUT WHAT DOES THAT MATTER? SHE CAN HAVE A **HUNDRED** ROSES IF SHE WISHES. A HUNDRED... OR A **THOUSAND.**

BEING OBADIAH HORN'S CONSORT MIGHT BE A POSITION SHE COULD GET VERY **USED** TO...

*NO ELEPHANTMEN ALIVE

I DON'T LIKE DECEIVING HIM THIS WAY, BUT... IF I HADN'T ***PREPARED*** FOR A TIME LIKE THIS...

WELL, IT DOESN'T BEAR THINKING ABOUT.

A STORY, A STORY, LET IT COME, LET IT GO...

YOU MUST KEEP YOUR FEELINGS IN CHECK, SAHARA.

AND TRUST THAT YOU HAVE DONE THE RIGHT THING.

PANYA IS STRONG, SHE KNOWS HOW TO TAKE CARE OF HERSELF.

JUST AS I HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.

STAY BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL, SAHARA, AND YOUR BABY WILL BE THAT WAY TOO.

YES, BUT I'VE BEEN WITH OBADIAH FOR ***TEN YEARS***, AND SO MUCH HAS CHANGED IN THAT TIME...

"SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED SINCE WE WENT TO MARS.

"HOW MANY CHILDREN COULD WE HAVE HAD IN A DECADE?

"THREE? FOUR?"

"HOW MANY CHILDREN WERE BORN OF MAN IN THAT TIME? THREE ***BILLION*** FOUR BILLION?

"WE WANT ONLY ***ONE***.

"WHEN THOSE IN POWER HAVE USE FOR THE ELEPHANTMEN, THEY DO AS THEY ARE TOLD...

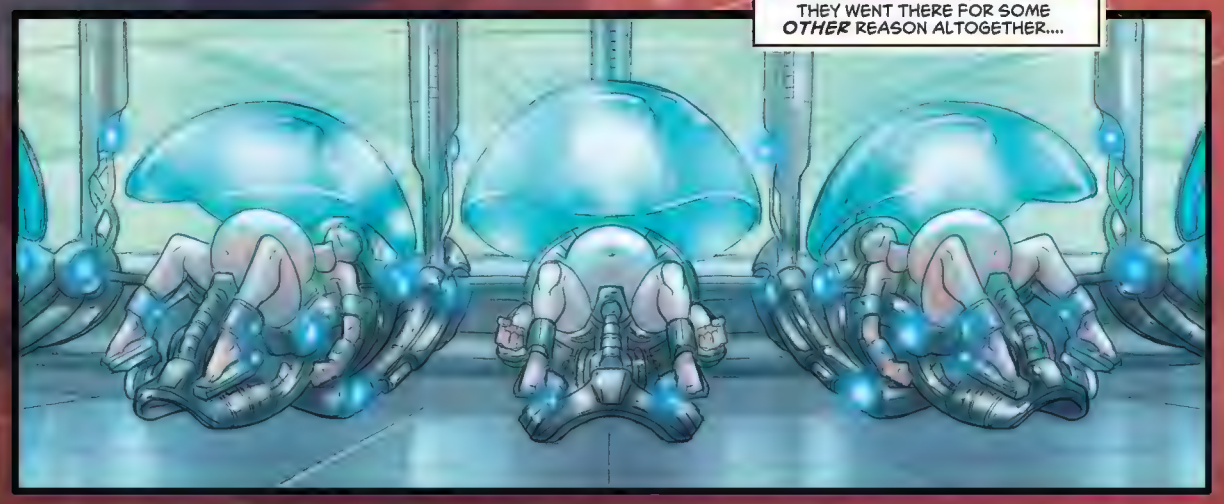
"WHEN AN ELEPHANTMAN WANTS SOMETHING, THERE ARE MEETINGS, ADVISORY PANELS... LAWS ARE PASSED; ALL SO THAT THEIR RIGHTS CAN BE DENIED WITH ***AUTHORITY***.

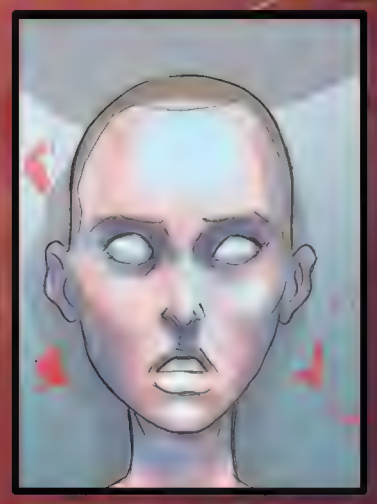
"THE TRIP TO MARS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN NO MORE THAN A WILD GOOSE CHASE... THE ATTACK ON OBADIAH AND THE OTHERS ***DISMISSED*** BY PROMETHEAN PSYCHOTHERAPISTS AS A KIND OF MASS ***HALLUCINATION***...

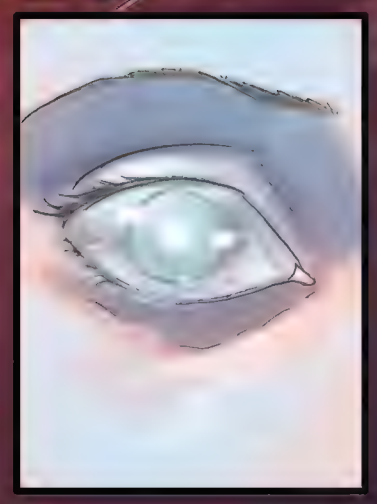
"A SIDE EFFECT OF ***LUCID DREAMING*** THEY EXPERIENCED IN ***HYPERSLEEP***.

"THE CRYSTALS PROVED TO BE OF LITTLE VALUE... WE HAVE SOME IN OUR LIVING ROOM... ***BEAUTIFUL*** BUT NOT WHAT PROMETHEAN SENT US TO MARS FOR.

"I WONDER SOMETIMES, IF PERHAPS THEY WENT THERE FOR SOME ***OTHER*** REASON ALTOGETHER....







MARS • 2251

SCHRODT HAD BEEN WONDERING HOW LONG IT'LL BE BEFORE HE STOPS JUMPING WHEN THE INFORMATION AGENCY DIRECTOR APPEARS IN HIS MORGUE.

YVETTE. WE'RE GETTING HER OUT OF HERE. I FOUND HER A PLACE TO REST.

THERE WON'T BE ANY CEREMONY, BUT IT'S FITTING, I GUESS.

HE'S NOT SURE WHETHER IT'S EASIER TO LIVE WITH A GUILTY CONSCIENCE -- OR WITH THE FEAR OF *THE SILENCER* KILLING HIS FAMILY.*

HE'LL NEVER KNOW -- HE'S HAD TO LIVE WITH *BOTH*.

*See ELEPHANTMEN #43

CROSSLAND SIGNED THE ORDER SO QUICKLY, I THINK HIS MIND MUST HAVE BEEN ON OTHER THINGS.

HE DIDN'T NOTICE THAT THE ORDER INCLUDED *TUSK* HERE.

WHAT'S *LEFT* OF HIM.

HE DESERVES A PROPER RESTING PLACE, TOO.

GRUENWALD DIDN'T STICK AROUND TO CHAT.

IT'S NICE TO HAVE TWO *EMPTY* DRAWERS IN THE MORGUE. TWO STIFFS HE *DOESN'T* HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT.

OF COURSE, THERE'LL BE ANOTHER ONE ALONG, SOON ENOUGH.

IT'S BEEN A VERY *BUSY* WEEK FOR YOU, HASN'T IT, *DOCTOR SCHRODT?*

THE INFORMATION AGENCY • 2259

Uh... WHO LET YOU IN HERE? THIS IS A, Um, *STERILE* AREA, I'LL HAVE TO ASK YOU TO *LEAVE*.

STERILE, AND *SECURE*. I LOCKED THE DOOR.

PLEASE DON'T *PANIC*, YOUR TIME IS *LIMITED*.

YOUR COFFEE IS LACED WITH A SLOW-ACTING *POTENT* POISON FOR WHICH THERE IS *NO* ANTIDOTE.

WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

WHO-- WHO *SENT* YOU... WHO *ARE* YOU?

I'M A SIMPLE STORYTELLER.* I'M HERE TO RECORD YOUR LIFE.

*See ELEPHANTMEN #41

BAD DECISIONS MAKE *GOOD STORIES*, DON'T THEY, DOCTOR?

LIKE DRINKING THAT COFFEE.

"PHYSICIAN FOUND DEAD IN HIS OWN MORGUE!"

OR YOUR ARRANGEMENT WITH THE SILENCER.

YOU WORK FOR *HIM?*

I WORK FOR NO ONE.

NOW, TELL ME YOUR STORY BEFORE THE POISON CAUSES YOUR *LARYNX* TO CONTRACT.

WHATEVER YOU CHOSE TO TELL ME, NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS.

WHAT ABOUT MY *WIFE*... MY *KIDS?*

THEY'LL BE FINE. ONLY I WILL KNOW YOUR STORY.

NOW, *TELL* ME...

HE SAID NOTHING MORE.

HE JUST WAITED.

AND SO SCHRODT *TOLD* HIS STORY AND FELL ASLEEP, *PEACEFULLY*, A LITTLE LATER AMONGST ALL THOSE WHO HAD PASSED TO THE NEXT LIFE WITH THEIR DEATHS UNSOLVED.

STRANGELY ENOUGH, HIS *LAST* THOUGHT WAS NOT OF HIS FAMILY; HE SIMPLY WONDERED WHERE GRUENWALD HAD LAID YVETTE AND TUSK TO REST...

TOMB OF
THE UNKNOWN
WARRIOR
HERE LIES THE BODY OF
ONE OF THE MANY
FALLEN HEROES
WHO DIED IN THE
AFRO-SINO WAR
2239-2242
You will never know all their stories
You will never know all their names
You may not understand why they fought
But you owe them just the same

ABOUT the CREATORS

RICHARD STARKINGS is the creator of HIP FLASK and ELEPHANTMEN. Born and raised in England, Starkings worked for five years at Marvel UK's London offices as editor, designer and occasional writer of ZOIDS, GHOSTBUSTERS, TRANSFORMERS and the DOCTOR WHO comic strip. He is perhaps best known for his work with the award-winning Comicraft design and lettering studio, which he founded in 1992 with John 'JG' Roshell. Starkings & Roshell also co-authored the best-selling books COMIC BOOK LETTERING THE COMICRAFT WAY and TIM SALE: BLACK AND WHITE.

TONY PARKER is a critically acclaimed artist, Eisner- nominated for his work on DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP? He has worked in comics for nearly every major company, as well as television, movies, and commercial design, preferring comics above the rest. On the rare chance you see him out of his studio, be aware that it's not him, but a doppleganger. He never leaves his studio.

DAVID HINE has been working in comics since the late 1980s. After creating a name for himself at Marvel UK as an inker on projects such as ZOIDS, SLEEZE BROTHERS and, sorry, Dave, CARE BEARS, he wisely fled licensed comics. His magnum opus STRANGE EMBRACE was originally published in black and white as a miniseries by Tundra, but it was the publication of the, now-hard-to-find, collected edition by Active Images which led to his current career as a writer at Marvel Comics on titles such as DISTRICT X/MUTOPIA X, DAREDEVIL: REDEMPTION, THE 198 and SILENT WAR. Be sure and check out his Image Comics series with UK comics legend Shaky Kane, THE BULLETPROOF COFFIN.

SHAKY KANE has applied his special form of psychedelic dementia to strips ranging from his own MONSTER TRUCK from Image Comics to THE A-MEN to JUDGE DREDD and SOUL SISTERS in the Galaxy's Greatest Comic, 2000AD. His latest, hatest work is the surreal Image comics BULLETPROOF COFFIN and BULLETPROOF COFFIN DISINTERRED, a gem unearthed by David Hine.

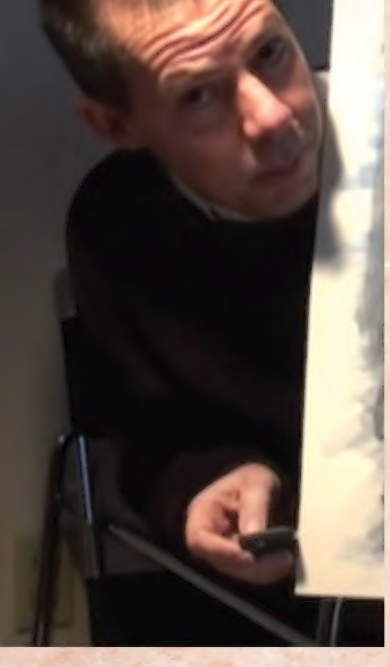
AXEL MEDELLIN was born in 1975 in Guadalajara, Mexico. Axel was a straight A-student until he graduated as an industrial designer and decided he wanted to draw comic books for a living, which in Mexico is like signing a suicide note. After working in advertising, illustration, storyboards and comic books in Mexico, Axel's first U.S. work appeared in METAL HURLANT, followed by stories for HEAVY METAL, FABLEWOOD, Zenoscope's GRIMM FAIRY TALES and Boom! Studios' MR STUFFINS. Before becoming the regular artist on ELEPHANTMEN, he completed Image Comics' 50 GIRLS 50.

BOO COOK lives in Brighton, England with his lovely wife Gemma. He has worked on 2000AD for Tharg the Mighty in Blighty for eleven years now, drawing favorites such as JUDGE DREDD, JUDGE ANDERSON, A.B.C WARRIORS and a basketcase of covers including a run on Marvel's X-FACTOR series. If you want to track down a big chunk of Boo, look for the ASYLUM collection, and if it leaves you begging for more, ask him about BLUNT.

ROB STEEN arrived at his current profession in illustration after careers as a musician, morgue technician, record store clerk and graphic designer. After graduating from The University of Comicraft under the guidance of Professor Richard Starkings, he eventually settled on a sedentary life of drawing. For the last few years he has devoted his life to the study of Flanimals, which have produced five books so far, with the latest, FLANIMALS POP-UP, now available in all good bookstores. He lives in New York with his wife Jill and demented cat Minnie.

JOHN ROSHELL a.k.a. "JG", a.k.a. "Mr. Fontastic", a.k.a. "Comicraft's Secret Weapon", grew up nary an iPod's throw from Apple in Northern California. These days he uses the Mac to create fonts and design books, logos and websites, including the official ELEPHANTMEN site at HipFlask.com. He also writes CHARLEY LOVES ROBOTS and plays a mean guitar.

ABOUT the CREATORS



DAVE SIM is a Canadian artist who dropped out of high school to pursue a career in comics and is best known as creator/writer/publisher of CEREBUS THE AARDVARK, his black and white monthly book which ran for 300 issues starting in 1977. CEREBUS began as a parody of CONAN THE BARBARIAN and other sword and sorcery comics, but the series quickly evolved into a thoughtful examination of politics, theology, metaphysics, feminism and gender issues featuring ever more progressive storytelling techniques. In recent years, Sim has produced GLAMOURPUSS, an examination of photorealistic comics in comic book form, and JUDENHASS, an experimental graphic novel about the Holocaust. Sim is a pioneer and advocate of self-publishing, and was one of the key figures in the creation of the Creator's Bill of Rights in 1988. He has criticized the use of copyright to restrict creators, and has made arrangements for his body of work to fall into the public domain following his death.

MONIFA ALDRIDGE was raised in Oakland, California, and is - like Panya - a Belly Dancer...she is also a Poet, Writer, & Artist. Her first published comic strip, DEVIL, was featured in ELEPHANTMEN #33. She is steadily at work, producing more comics. So keep a look out for Monifa as she makes her mark!

BLOND to you, Kevin to his friends, has worked on a variety of comics as a colour artist, including DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP? with Tony Parker and Richard Starkings for BOOM!; SUPERGIRL for DC Comics, HUNTER KILLER, WITHCBLADE MANGA, CITY OF HEROES and FRESHMEN for Top Cow. He finds vegetarians insufferable.

CAMILLA D'ERRICO is our second Canadian cover artist, and has been drawing comic books since 2001; you'll see her at shows under her TANPOPO banner, selling her beautiful self-published series, TANPOPO, as well as the Image series SKY PIRATES OF NEO TERRA.

JENNY FRISON is a Chicago-based comic book cover artist who graduated from the Joe Kubert School of Cartooning and Graphic Arts. Her work includes covers for REVIVAL, THE DREAMER, ANGEL, RED SONJA and HACK/SLASH, and illustrations for an adaptation of Lewis Carroll's ALICE IN WONDERLAND and THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS with Jill Thompson.

BRANDON GRAHAM the grandson of pinup artist Bill Randall hails from Oregon but grew up in Seattle where he developed his skills as a graffiti artist and comic book auteur working for Antarctic Press and Radio Comix. In 1997, he moved to New York City where he found work with NBM Publishing and became a founding member of comics collective Meathaus. His book ESCALATOR was published by Alternative Comics in January 2005, when he returned to Seattle. His recent work includes the Eisner-nominated KING CITY , MULTIPLE WARHEADS and PROPHET from Image comics. He lives in Vancouver with his wife, Marian Churchland.

TULA LOTAY is not only the manager of TRAVELLING MAN, one of the best, if not THE best comic book stores in Leeds, England, she is also the organizer of THOUGHT BUBBLE, one of the best, if not THE best comic book conventions in England, and the editor of and contributor to the THOUGHT BUBBLE ANTHOLOGY. She is currently working on super secret projects for DC Comics and Image.

FIONA MENG has a passion for art and storytelling that led her to pursue a career in illustration. To advance her drawing and painting skills, she attended Emily Carr University, Canada, where she published her first manga. Having experienced both Eastern and Western cultures, Meng developed a distinguished hybrid illustration style. Her work can be seen in international publications such as SPECTRUM. She is currently working as an instructor at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco.

"OMINOUS. GRITTY. CHILLING." ★★★★

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